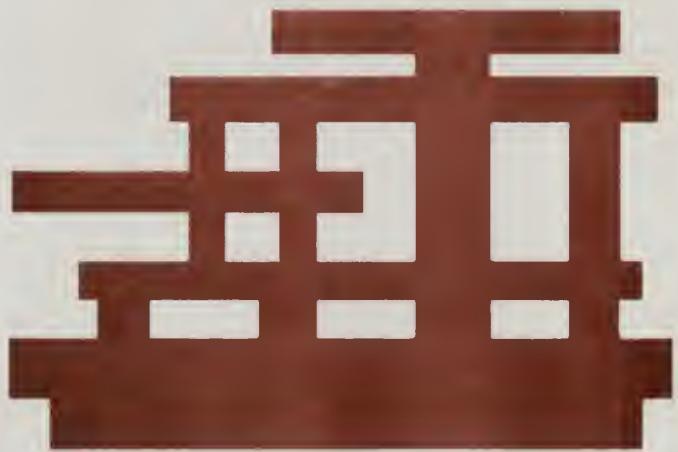


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ARGUS
1984



ARGUS
1984

One Eye White

Street weeping
Rainwater collects
Oil stains after
The rainbow flies
Color up slicking
Light away butterfly's
Hope riding Icarus
Dreams with an Argus
Eye gutter clinging
Down litter wash
Hidden past gates
Grates Hell
Rushing sewer
Mains flushing
Scum out the night
Blind one eye white
Looks fast shadow talking
Homeric myths
Trading legends turning
Truths turning heroes
Toward the sea
Drowning
Water spots
Color washing
Pigeons on the Bay.

Allen M. Ford

ARGUS — THE MIND'S EYE

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PLEXUS

Although the creative spirit is individual, this creativity rarely achieves full expression in a vacuum. It requires a network of support, including sympathetic but honest criticism by creative peers and a vehicle to take the final product before an audience. The purpose of *Argus* is to provide an outlet for the creative expression of the mind's eye of the students of Northwestern, and, hopefully, to stimulate by example the creativity of others.

Argus, too, is the product of a network of people. The Creative Writing program of Northwestern has encouraged and developed the talents of many of the writers whose works have appeared in *Argus*, and some have gone on to win awards in state, regional, and national competitions. In past years, *Argus* has been blessed with dedicated advisors who have guided with great care the development of this literary magazine. And, certainly, without a dedicated staff, there would be no *Argus*.

We are very pleased to announce that the 1983 edition of *Argus*, edited by Susan Haga and advised by Mrs. Ann Black, has been awarded first place in the literary magazine competition of the Southern Literary Festival. The *Argus* staff has worked hard to bring this issue to the NSU community, and hope that it is as well received as the '83 edition.

Finally, the beginning of a student literary/arts magazine seven years ago was not an easy matter, and each issue since has built upon the experiences, trials, and triumphs of the one before. Hopefully, the future of *Argus* will be guarded with all the zealous care of a hundred-eyed giant, that Northwestern might continue to have a literary magazine worthy of representing NSU students.

Debra A. Waters

Argus is a literary/arts magazine published by the students of Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, Louisiana.
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NORTHWESTERN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Our special thanks to Mrs. Ann Black, Dr. E. Robert Black, Dr. Sara A. Burroughs, Dr. Christine Ford, The Loft Theatre Readers, and the students of Northwestern State University.



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ARGUS AWARDS

We congratulate the following winners of *Argus* Fall and Spring Literary and Arts Contests. This year, final judging of the Literary Contests was done by faculty from the English Department, and we are grateful for their assistance.

FALL 1983

Poetry

First Place	Leslie Anne Gregory	"The Oatmeal Possessed"
Second Place	Debra A. Waters	"Sea Shadows"
Third Place	Rebecca Elaine Hale	"To Her Lusty Lover"
Honorable Mention	Sharon K. Hammel	"A Collection of Haiku Poetry"
Honorable Mention	Rhonda Byers	"Pervasive Gossip"
Honorable Mention	Gerald L. Spencer	"Ruth"
Honorable Mention	Leslie Anne Gregory	"Ho-Ho-Ho!"
Honorable Mention	Debra A. Waters	"Transportation"

Short Story

First Place	R. Mark Rachal	"Pet Problem"
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SPRING 1984

Poetry

First Place	T. L. Scott	"Neighbors"
Second Place	Debra A. Waters	"Let the Good Times Roll"
Third Place	Leslie Anne Gregory	"Neighbor-Man"
Honorable Mention	Ellen Dollar	"Destiny"
Honorable Mention	Edward R. Thomas	"Ordination"
Honorable Mention	Leslie Anne Gregory	"Beach Blanket Bargins"
Honorable Mention	Susan Dollar	"Spinster"
Honorable Mention	Ellen Dollar	"Childhood Memories"
Honorable Mention	T. L. Scott	"To My Brother"

Short Story

First Place	Debra A. Waters	"King of the Castle"
Second Place	Drew Files	"Last Destiny"
Third Place	Varis Ransi	"Identity"

Personal Essay

First Place	Gary Fields	"The Phantom"
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Photography Contest

First Place	Andy Nelson	"Old Plantation House in the Country"
Second Place	Reneé Richard	"Southwest Louisiana I"
Third Place	Michelle Jackson	Untitled
Honorable Mention	Reneé Richard	"Southwest Louisiana II"
Honorable Mention	Mark Griffith	"Columns"

Students from the Creative Writing Program at Northwestern often receive awards in state and regional literary competitions or are published in other magazines after *Argus* has gone to press. We are proud to honor these writers.

Daphne DeVerger "The Other Side of the Blackboard"

First Place, Louisiana College Theatre Festival, *Argus*, Vol. 7, No. 1.

Allen M. Ford "Necrosis"

Honorable Mention, Poetry, Eleanor B. North Award of *The Rectangle**, *Argus*, Vol. 2, No. 1.

Susan Long Haga "The Stripping Room"

Publication in *The Rectangle*, *Argus*, Vol. 6, No. 1

"The Grass Ring"

Honorable Mention, Short Story, Southern Literary Festival, *Argus*, Vol. 7, No. 1.

Eric Maron "The Bank Teller"

Second Place, Short Story, Louisiana College Writers Society, *Argus*, Vol. 7, No. 1.

Shari Miller "Narcissus Myths in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*"

Honorable Mention, The Frederic Fadner Award of *The Rectangle*.

"Ninety Days till Christmas," "Glimpses," "The Encounter" (*Argus*, Vol. 7, No. 1), all published in *The Rectangle*.

Myrna Schexnider "Fall Comes Without You"

Selected for publication in the National College Poetry Review, *Argus*, Vol. 7, No. 1.

Debra A. Waters "Characterization of Werther in *Die Leiden des Jungen Werthers*"

Second Place, Formal Essay, Louisiana College Writers Society.

**The Rectangle* is the official publication of the Sigma Tau Delta National English Honor Society.

Warren Easton Shade

Spring Contest Honorable Mention Photography

Train whistle
desolate
in mid-afternoon,
rumbling, squeaking,
roaring train,
shakes the houses
with its presence
and then slowly
grumbles forward.
No, onward — through
the distance, into
the fog,
until
the sound is a
mere echo of truth.

Ellen Dollar



Columns by Mark Griffith

Spring Contest Honorable Mention Poetry

Childhood Memories

Fat Mamma,
 fat black mamma,
 take me home tonight . . .
 catfish soup,
 cornbread for supper
 tastes so fine.
 Big Mamma,
 big black mamma,
 sit me down in
 your soft; sturdy lap;
 Read me story,
 Uncle Remus
 rabbit gets away:
 Oh Mama,
 strong, black mamma,
 hug me in
 your arm's comfort hold,
 close to your safe,
 sweet bosom
 pain goes away.

Ellen Dollar

Spring Contest Honorable Mention Poetry

To My Brother

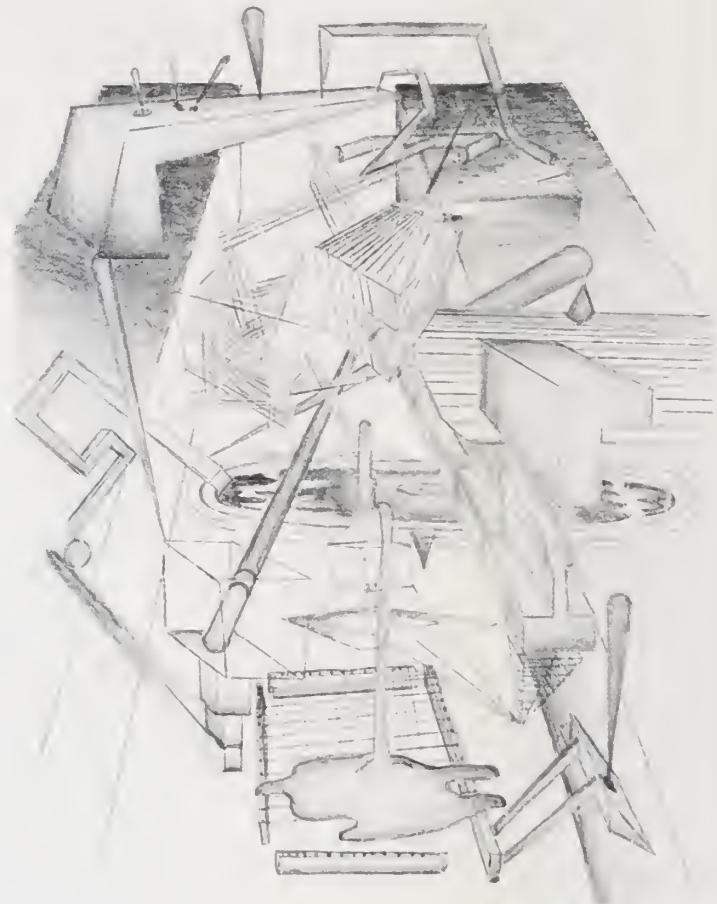
We never knew who set them.
 I sometimes thought it was
 Homer Stanfield with a torch,
 but I was six and hadn't learned about
 spontaneous combustion.
 You and dad took both tractors
 to plow a breaker above the tree line,
 against the fire that crept
 up and over the ridge.
 Mama stayed in the kitchen,
 passed the time between
 frying green tomatoes and calling
 the ranger station. She simply
 nodded at my two-minute reports.
 Dad came back, said
 you were in the north field.
 My throat went tight and I ran
 into the yard and called and called.
 The smoke drifted down the hillside
 and settled on the August corn.
 I knew you were dead, that we
 would find your charred body
 indistinguishable from the fallen pines
 that were trapped in the rush of flames.
 Who would help me build grass huts?
 Who would speed down the curving
 road and always win the race?
 I hated the fire, I hated the green
 mountain that stood and let
 the fire consume it.
 Then there you were.
 You rubbed your soot-covered face
 against my shirt and let me
 break the blisters on your arms.

T. L. Scott

Graveyard Shift

He hears the hum of
machinery, backdrop
for his operations;
looks over the furnace,
its hourly check.
He turns and silently walks
into the drone of
late night production.

Susan E. Dollar



Untitled pencil drawing by Richard E. Chunn

Men At Work

Built with the greatest of care,
Constructed with choice materials.
Time and patience has left it
Devoid of potholes and cracks.
It has no detours or by-passes.

This road, my lifeline to you,
Has relieved the congested traffic
Of thoughts in my mind.

Rhonda Byers

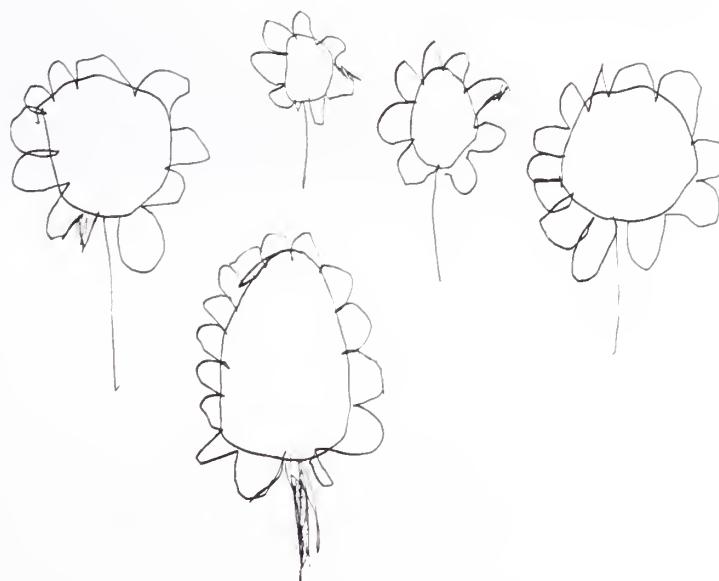
Spring Contest First Place Poetry

Neighbors

We sit on his front stoop,
spread the Sunday paper across two laps
and titter at the funnies.
It is late September,
and the marigolds have gone brown.
The rubbish left inside
is closed behind us.
Delilah, he says,
will be back tomorrow.
I smile politely and stare at the grey
mushrooms that grow beside his steps.
She'll bring Phoebe, he tells me,
and groceries and drown him
with kisses. The curve in the road
makes the wind rise
like a wave, he says.
I smile again. I know no wife,
no child will return
and I believe nothing.

He says the only mail he gets is bills.
And one letter that leaves him
cold-cocked. I wash his piled dishes,
I watch him through
the steamy window. He stands out back,
checks the worm-bed, chews a wild onion.
He says he'd rather be outside,
than hear the phone
ring and the same old lady
has reached a wrong number.

T. L. Scott



Untitled pen and ink drawing by Silas Dollar, age 5



Untitled black and white photograph by Andy Nelson

Spring Contest Second Place Poetry

Let the Good Times Roll

In Chevy pickup
Shotgun racked for all to see
We barrel wild down
Highway 1 leaving ancient
Bricked streets and hallowed
French priests for Cajun good
Times in red sceptered kingdom
Playing games, playing for keeps —
Laissez le bon temps rouler!

Rolling down past ghost bayous
We see a sign — beer, boudin, rolaids,
And stopping to refresh, replenish, idly
Toast with up-turned cans
Brown pouched pelicans expelled from
Paradise replaced with sportsmen
Running three-wheeled, free-wheeled
Hounding deer with Catahoula curs —
Laissez le bon temps rouler!

Picking up speed and conversation
With fiddle and French tuned in
We talk the miles past cypress knees
Til, in sudden silent wonder
Bridge the great Atchafalaya
Thoughts lost in forest primeval
Broken finally by sigh and cheer
Fat City heralds Quarter's promise —
Laissez le bon temps rouler!

Debra A. Waters

Bedtime Story

Sunset Fairy Princess
tiptoes her dance
across
red Kisatchie Hills.
Grey-dangling, moss-draped ears
catch her
butterfly song.
Her airy steps
sway
piney green feathertips,
tickling the azure-bellied sky.
Orange-pink orb
descends slowly
to rest;
She stops the dance
in brief tribute,
then flutters away, mothlike,
into the indigo night.

Susan E. Dollar

Pined Away Piney Wood Remembrances

On Indian summer January morns,
Dog and I go to the places we went
Long autumns past:
Forests where our songs were sung,
Woodlots where our hearts were broken,
And again we cry.
He watches strange cars that pass staring,
I quote William Carlos Williams:
Dog sadly smiles,
He is old and dying.
I am young and must endure such changes.
The seasons, the trees, the songs are not ours,
And not the same. Neither are we.
Too many faces now invade solitude,
Too few trees to listen,
Too many chainsaws to break our peace:
Here we shall not cry again.
The woods are old and dying.
I am young and to blame.

Leslie Anne Gregory

Spring Contest Second Place Photography

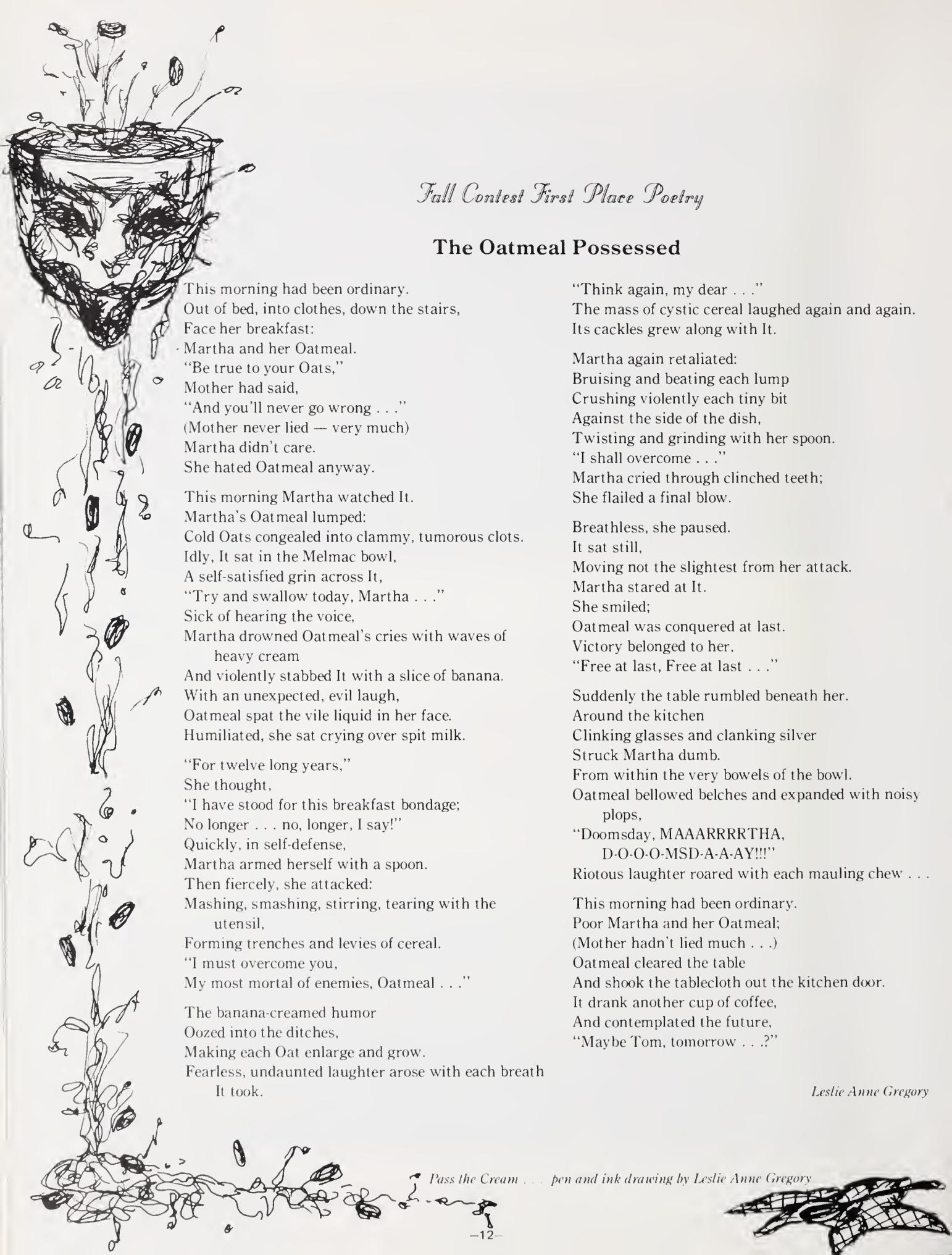


Southwest Louisiana II by René Richard

Spring Contest Honorable Mention Photography



Southwest Louisiana I by René Richard



Fall Contest First Place Poetry

The Oatmeal Possessed

This morning had been ordinary.
Out of bed, into clothes, down the stairs,
Face her breakfast:
· Martha and her Oatmeal.
“Be true to your Oats,”
Mother had said,
“And you’ll never go wrong . . .”
(Mother never lied — very much)
Martha didn’t care.
She hated Oatmeal anyway.

This morning Martha watched It.
Martha’s Oatmeal lumped:
Cold Oats congealed into clammy, tumorous clots.
Idly, It sat in the Melmac bowl,
A self-satisfied grin across It,
“Try and swallow today, Martha . . .”
Sick of hearing the voice,
Martha drowned Oatmeal’s cries with waves of
heavy cream
And violently stabbed It with a slice of banana.
With an unexpected, evil laugh,
Oatmeal spat the vile liquid in her face.
Humiliated, she sat crying over spit milk.

“For twelve long years,”
She thought,
“I have stood for this breakfast bondage;
No longer . . . no, longer, I say!”
Quickly, in self-defense,
Martha armed herself with a spoon.
Then fiercely, she attacked:
Mashing, smashing, stirring, tearing with the
utensil,
Forming trenches and levies of cereal.
“I must overcome you,
My most mortal of enemies, Oatmeal . . .”

The banana-creamed humor
Oozed into the ditches,
Making each Oat enlarge and grow.
Fearless, undaunted laughter arose with each breath
It took.

“Think again, my dear . . .”
The mass of cystic cereal laughed again and again.
Its cackles grew along with It.

Martha again retaliated:
Bruising and beating each lump
Crushing violently each tiny bit
Against the side of the dish,
Twisting and grinding with her spoon.
“I shall overcome . . .”
Martha cried through clinched teeth;
She flailed a final blow.

Breathless, she paused.
It sat still,
Moving not the slightest from her attack.
Martha stared at It.
She smiled;
Oatmeal was conquered at last.
Victory belonged to her,
“Free at last, Free at last . . .”

Suddenly the table rumbled beneath her.
Around the kitchen
Clinking glasses and clanking silver
Struck Martha dumb.
From within the very bowels of the bowl,
Oatmeal bellowed belches and expanded with noisy
plops,
“Doomsday, MAAARRRRTHA,
D-O-O-O-MSD-A-A-AY!!!”
Riotous laughter roared with each mauling chew . . .

This morning had been ordinary.
Poor Martha and her Oatmeal;
(Mother hadn’t lied much . . .)
Oatmeal cleared the table
And shook the tablecloth out the kitchen door.
It drank another cup of coffee,
And contemplated the future.
“Maybe Tom, tomorrow . . .?”

Leslie Anne Gregory

Pass the Cream . . . pen and ink drawing by Leslie Anne Gregory

Jamaica, A Dream State

Returning to frostbitten Louisiana this January, it was hard to believe I had just spent two weeks as a sun worshipper in Jamaica. Though I had heard much about the Caribbean island, it surpassed my expectations in ways I had not anticipated.

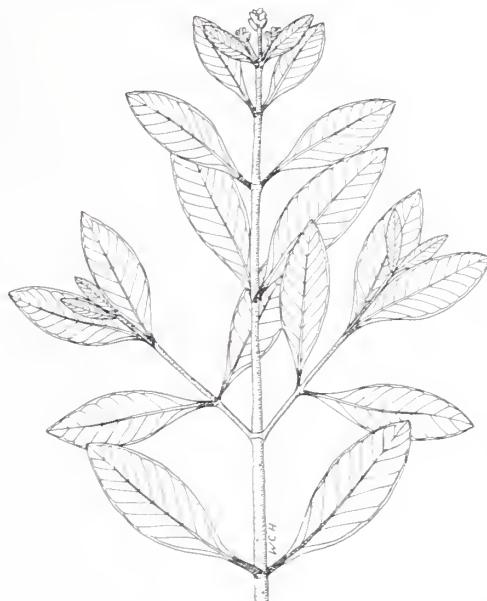
When I arrived in Montego Bay on Christmas Eve, it was a balmy seventy-five degrees. The transfer to Negril, a small town on the northwestern tip of the island, went smoothly via minibus. Driving on the left along the narrow winding roads took some getting accustomed to. As we climbed our way up from the sea, the city of Montego Bay shone in contrast to the ocean, sparkling with moonlight. A shooting star arching to the water was my first premonition of what was to come; the magic had begun.

Negril is a small town spread along a seven-mile crescent of white sand beach.

In contrast, the western end of Negril rises to coral cliffs which drop abruptly to coral reefs where snorkeling is superb. Awakening Christmas morning, I walked through warm sand to view the sea, its colors ranging from sea-foam green outward to where the reef reflected a dark turquoise. Immediately, I felt a sense of awed relaxation, and began unwinding. In such a setting, time takes on a new dimension, a serene transition from day to night, unmarked by hours and unmarred by schedule. I was beginning to feel a part of the shumane pace of the island.

The cup of coffee at the open air cafe takes much longer to arrive than we're accustomed. As the sun begins to heat the sand, I see a sailboat raising its sail; the colors and motion of the ocean mesmerize me while I find myself tapping my toe to the lyrical, ever present beat of reggae music. When I realize I'd forgotten about the coffee, it arrives, distinctly the flavor of Jamaican beans and already sweetened. When I choose not to eat breakfast, my noonday needs are satisfied by brightly attired women vendors, strolling along the beach carrying baskets of fruit atop their heads, selling fresh orange juice or just-baked banana bread.

The usual eighty-five degree day on the beach provides not only a friendly temperate ocean to play in but there may also be a game of volleyball, or the



*Black Mangrove, pen and ink drawing
by Walter C. Holmes, NSU Faculty*

chance to view a windsurfer struggling with the strength of the sea or a myriad of differently shaped and sized beach-combers in varied degrees of clothing. Negril is a favorite vacation secret for Europeans as well as North Americans. While sipping a rum punch under an umbrella in the midday sun, I hear English, German, or French being spoken. All peoples enjoy the charisma of Jamaica.

The Jamaicans are eager to smile, or talk in their native lilting tongue, and can speak proper English with the same ease. They have the same poise of motion in their pace, unhurried but steady in purpose. There is a bond of nationality among them, a pride in their twenty-one year old democratic government, having been a dependent of the English Commonwealth prior to that time. A certain kindness springs between the Jamaicans, a brother and sisterhood so apparent as I

watch them. They are a proud nation struggling between the keeping of Jamaican ways and traditions, yet desiring an American standard of living.

Many of the Jamaicans are very poor. Some houses are built of standard construction, but often shelters are a patchwork of corrugated steel. Items such as jogging shoes cost nearly what a Jamaican with a good job would make in two weeks. Imported items such as these are expensive and not found easily in the market place. This situation encourages theft, for the Jamaicans see that the tourists have so much, and they so little. For this reason it is advantageous for travelers to be careful with their valuable items. Vendors of coral jewelry, clothing, and food will barter along the beach. They are friendly and seem receptive when my mood or pocketbook discourage me from buying. The best prices either in goods or food are found at the beach.

The island food is the most delectable of foreign fare I've encountered. Seafood is abundant, often simmered in a spicy curry sauce with rice. Sweet cakes of banana and coconut are rich and tasty; their main ingredients come from trees outside the back door. The food is just one of the continuing pleasures surrounding me, another of which is music.

My fascination with and appreciation of Jamaican music takes me to Kingston for the acclaimed Reggae Superjam. I awake before dawn to meet the

By Lurane Francis

minibus, a private transportation unit responsible for most Jamaican travel, since few people can afford automobiles. The fare is established, though prices are subject to bartering, especially when another minibus is present to provide the same service. There's a competition between drivers to fill their buses; since a scheduled departure time is not kept, the first bus to be filled is the first to leave. We transverse the isle, first to Sav La Mar and then east across the mountains toward Kingston town. The island is an emerald shining in the sea; luscious tropical foliage abounds, exotic trees and plants adorn winding roads that often follow rushing rivers as they cut through mountains. This spectacular scenery astounds and surprises me at every turn, small villages tucked between hillsides and waterfalls cascading down rock and vine.

Dropping down again to sea level, another Jamaica awaits, a cluttered noisy market place called Spanish Town, a precursor to Kingston. Entering Kingston center, the sidewalks and streets are a ramble with people and trucks, goods and food; the sights and sounds entrance while the city pulses all around. Kingston is well-known for its natural bay; a place where pirates sought shelter in tropical clime is now replaced by cargo ships going out to sea. It is a city of diversity, the blocks of old market, survivors of hundreds of years, stand beside monoliths of glass and steel, buildings reaching for the sky. These are reduced in size by the back-drop of the Blue Mountains which face the sea.

I am pleasantly surprised by the ease with which I tour the city. A Jamaican I meet gives me an informal tour of the city, bringing me down to Trenchtown where the peoples' hero, musician Bob Marley, had grown up. This ghetto still shows smiling-faced despite its harsh poverty. The Jamaican's tour was well worth the dinner and concert ticket given as payment; his services give me a glimpse of Kingston unknown to most travelers. Being with a Jamaican also provides safety in areas of the city I would not otherwise frequent.

As evening approaches, music fans gather for the Superjam. It begins with the Skatalites, their jazz-reggae fusion warming us for Gregory Isaacs, a melodic reggae balladeer. The crowd is psyched when Peter Tosh takes the stage at midnight. Cloaked in black robes, he cuts a striking image, a silhouette of African sculpture on stage. Reggae music reflects the Rastafarian religion, centering around a return-to-Ethiopia theme, cultivated by enjoyment of life and music, enhanced by smoking profuse amounts of marijuana. While Peter Tosh sings as a finale "Stand Up For Your Rights," the crowd rises to standing; floodlights display the entire auditorium swaying and singing. The feeling of their nationalism again floods me, this pride and love of these people for their homeland and their way of life. I leave the concert feeling I've been blessed with a magic that is Jamaica, and I do not want the spell to end.



Ganja, pen and ink drawing
by Walter C. Holmes, NSU Faculty

Daddy

Each word you speak
Adds a link to the chain
That leads through what I endure
It is this that allows
My path to be straight
And makes my footing so sure.

The example you give
Is not easy, by far
Yet it is one which is rightfully set
It is this that gives
My values their height
And sees that my goals are met.

The things you expect
Seem so out of reach
Yet you push, to strive for more
It is this, however
That has made me see
How to open many a door.

The strength you've shown
Has been deeply instilled
And makes me depend on you
It is this that lets
Me readily lean
Yet still be stronger too.

The love you give
Is easiest of all
For me to accept and take
It is this, that
Wipes away hurt and tears
Whenever I make a mistake.

LeAnn Gray



Untitled pen and ink drawing by Bob Tooke

An Old Man's Chocolate

The old man was limping toward them.
He was coming closer, and closer.
His red eyes were fixed on the young couple
standing on the sidewalk.
He stopped in front of the young boy and girl
who stood hand in hand.
The old man's chapped hands began to unwrap
some sort of candy
while his tongue licked his whitish lips.
He reached his hand,
which was holding a chocolate bar,
toward the girl.
"Here you go Sweetheart,
have some chocolate that I just bought.
It be expensive
but good."

The girl stood there in bewilderment.
"Ain't you trust an old man?" he screamed
revealing a toothless mouth.
"Ain't you trust me girl?" he questioned again.
The three stood in silence.

The young boy
looked back and forth
from the old man to the girl.
The girl's eyes were fixed on the candy.
The angry man's eyes were fixed on the girl.
The awkward silence was broken by
the old man's screeching.
"Take some chocolate from an old man.
Nobody trusts anybody any more.
You kids are scared of an old man?
Take a piece."
She slowly reached her hand out
as though the chocolate had teeth
and her fingers would be bitten.
She snapped off a small piece of chocolate.
"I'm glad you trust me," he said
"You got to trust people.
You got to trust people or you ain't got nothing."
he mumbled
as he hobbled away.
The girl looked at the boy's curious face
and then toward the old man
who had disappeared.
Then
she dropped the chocolate
into the dusty street.

Juliet Snowden



Untitled black and white photograph by David Milligan, NSU Faculty

Crackers in Bed

cheez-it-virgin-lust-queen
makes late-night, pimento-spread offers
to video-jesters
hears the chimes' toll and
he-man feet pad down wooden halls
knows they are yet another boarder's
listens intensely for
thin-ankled footsteps
yearns for kisses now dried
counts them on hands and piggies
changes the channel
eats bed-ridden crackers

cheesed-crumb-mistress silently waits

Leslie Anne Gregory

Spring Contest

Honorable Mention Poetry

Spinster

She dreams of it all as it will be,
Her split-level home in Suburbia,
with 2.5 perfectly pedigreed children.
And it will be,
Just as she has patterned it.
Though she is not sure
How or When
Her future will become complete.
She knows it should be
What she wants it to be
As she sits and knits her ultimate plan
with invisibly fraying strands
of hope.

Susan E. Dollar

Spring Contest

Honorable Mention Poetry

Destiny

The years cling to
her like fungus on
an ageless tree . . .
slowly growing stronger
as the wood silently decays.

Time caresses her
with its death-grip
gradually squeezing,
ever so patiently,
every hope of life,
from the seeds of her
dreams.

Ellen Dollar

The Phantom

They walk into the equipment room where all of the uniforms are kept. Shortly these two modern day gladiators will don their armor, transforming themselves from humans to something akin to the knights of the Crusades.

Walking out of the equipment room the two warriors are faced by an ocean of cement and sparkling lights. Several mechanical steeds sit unbridled, waiting quietly for their masters. The electrical hum of auxiliary power units permeates the air as the steeds take nourishment from the units and channel it to the engines.

The twosome walk silently across the ramp to their unusual steed, with its long drooping nose and gull wings. They sit comfortably in the cockpit, almost as comfortable as their ancestors of the past sat in the saddle. However, this horse is not an Arabian bred mount, nor is it a Kentucky thoroughbred. This horse is a McDonnel-Douglas F4 Phantom and the two warriors in the saddle are its masters and brains, its senses and nervous system. This is a steed built, not of flesh, but of flame and steel and aluminum. It is a product not of God, but of man's wild imagination, and it carries a different cargo than its forerunners.

The front-seated warrior takes hold of the reins and ushers his animal out onto the cement ocean while the other rides bent over the beast's sensory organ, the radar. On the ground, the great creature is large and clumsy, but in the time it takes a man to run 100 yards, it becomes anything but ungainly.

The new knights hurtle down the runway heading for a new kind of crusade, a new objective. No longer is the battle for territory with the victor taking a country, or a portion of land. Now the whole world is the prize. The Phantom leaps from the earth and heads skyward at such an angle to shame the Texas Cyclone. It stays in the angle of ascent for several minutes and when it finally levels off, the earth and its people are eleven miles away.

The steed lets out a thunderous roar as it passes through the speed of sound. The beast is

moving at nearly 1,000 miles an hour, but it is hard to judge such speeds because there are no reference points with which to compare. The moon shines down, silhouetting the knights and their deadly animal. During the crusades, the knights fought with lance and mace, but these modern day warriors are armed with nuclear tipped teeth. This one instrument of man's imagination has the ability to cause as much destruction in a single stroke as an entire century-long crusade of knights.

If any one element prevails now, it is silence. There is no longer any noise since the craft speeds somewhere ahead of all sound. The knights must keep a tight rein on their stallion now. If it is given the chance, it will throw them and the rest of the world into oblivion.

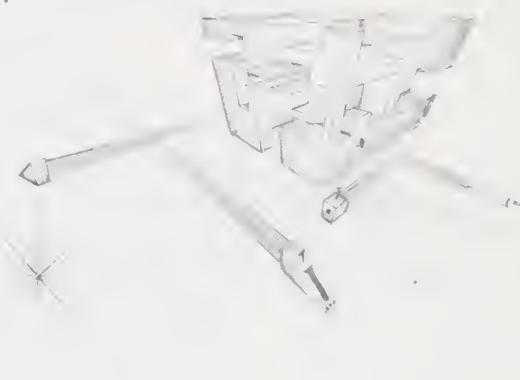
Soon the mission is over and the objective is reached. The knights prepare to return home. On the way, they see something that none of the knights of the roundtable ever envisioned, the earth and the heavens all in the same glance. It is easy to get caught up in this surreal world. However, their monarch does not like for his knights to go out gallivanting around.

The gladiators return home, but there are no trumpets blaring their triumphant reunion with loved ones. There are only the lights, which blend together in one solid stream as the Phantom touches down at nearly 300 miles per hour. Amid this flashing fanfare the warriors tether their mount to the auxiliary power unit and head back for the equipment room.

All is silent now, as the steed sits, grazing on its electrical and liquid nourishment. Everything appears as it was before the ride. Only one thing has changed. Before the ride the Phantom looked clumsy. Now it is silent, powerful, but most of all deadly. Yes, everything is as it was but it is not the same, it never will be again. God has given man life, but man has created supreme instruments of death. The Phantom has

taken man to the realm of death, and once there, nothing is ever quite the same again.

By Gary Fields



Untitled pencil drawing by Richard E. Chun

Perseverance

After the first twelve million years
Or so
It was apparent that the beaches would win.
Even so, the waves still come.

Waves never quit,
Or get disgusted
And say the hell with it.

After all these years,
They continue to assemble out there
Beyond sight.
They congregate, line up, and march in —
As though one more kamikaze rush
will bring the long sought
Victory.

You've got to hand it to the waves.
However,
If I were you,
I'd bet on the beaches.

*Jim W. Dollar
NSU Alumnus*

I liked seeing that
Fresh earth
As we planted the tree:
A chance for new life;
We can watch it grow.
And when it's time
I want to be put there,
Where it all begins,
So I can add
To the start of
Something new.
The end is
Always
A beginning.

Angelique

Delight

Mountain dew prisms
Capture the light
And diamond laced lilacs
Wild do grow
Past glass and litter
Triumph in sun.

Lisa Madden

Secret Winds

Green breezes whisper
Hints of eternity to the spirit's ear,
But they grow indistinct,
Muted by the red wind's roar
To the flesh's ear
That beats the pulse of now,
But now has passed, is passing,
And something in these russet drafts
Tells me
In the white wind's silent center
I will know.

*James R. Bartholomew
NSU Faculty*

Sprout

A black and white kitten, Sprout by name
Came into my life one cold December.
A skinny, scrawny scrap of matted fur
Not very lively as I can remember.

Soon with lots of food and TLC
He grew in leaps, hence his name.
Amusing himself by acting the clown,
Life had become one big happy game.

Rebecca Elaine Hale



Untitled black and white photograph by René Hughes



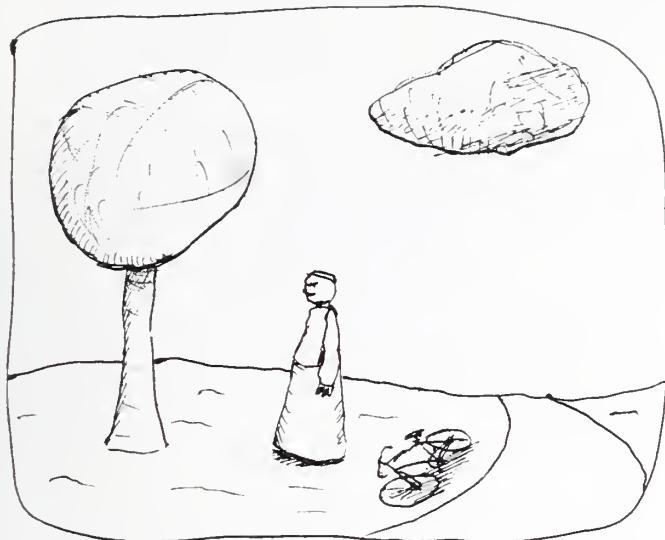
Cat, pencil drawing by Chirre Kraatz

Cat Tales

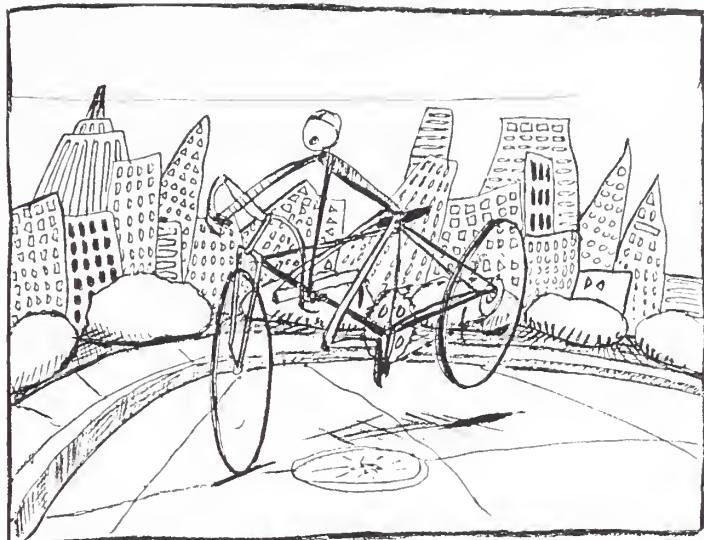
Fresh cut hair and my sleepy cat
Run, Nile-like, amongst
Quilt rivers and pillow valleys of the bed

In full-moon lit observations,
Tousled furs and tangled manes intertwine
Tails and shut-eyed thoughts:
Newness becoming united
Together shall grow to one.

Leslie Anne Gregory



Untitled pen and ink drawing by Bob Tooke



Untitled pen and ink drawing by Bob Tooke

Fall Contest Honorable Mention Poetry

“Ruth”

I had a girl named Ruth.
She was pretty, and that's the truth.
We rode a bike with a double seat.
It was fast. It was neat.
One day while riding, we hit a tree.
Now I must ride Ruthlessly.

Gerald L. Spencer



Untitled pen and ink drawing by Jim Webb

The Rattlesnake Who Charmed The Little Girl

(Based on a Southern Folktale)

"This happened a couple years back and not too far from here . . . No, ma'am, I don't recollect the family's name."
— M.S., an old Louisiana man, part Choctaw and somewhere in his eighties.

Young Love

A spider and I spent
Some time together one Summer.
She lived on a holly bush
In the backyard of the house
On West Street,
And captured me
With the perfection
Of her yellow-striped black body
And silver web.

I offered her small grasshoppers
Flushed from the St. Augustine,
And watched her kill and wrap for storage
With awe and deep admiration.

I always suspected
Her disappearance was the work
Of neighborhood toughs,
but could never pin it on them;
And it may be
That disappearing
Is a garden spider's way of saying,
"Thanks. I love you. Goodbye."

I came upon a group of her relatives
Years later
In some South Louisiana woods,
And made inquiries.
But they had nothing to say in the matter.

So I live unknowing;
And carry her memory
In a special compartment of my mind.

Jim W. Dollar
NSU Alumnus

A rattlesnake who lived beneath the floor
charmed the little girl until she fed him,
hand to mouth, the very biscuits from her plate
and grew so thin she could slip sideways between the
planks,
so thin her mama shook her head,
her daddy pulled his beard.

She loved that clever snake,
wanted to wear the diamonds on his back,
to see herself as two pin-pricks of light,
two perfect stars.
She envied his slender body,
coiling into places where no one else
would ever find her.

One day when she took her plate off the table,
her parents followed where she went.
They saw her lift the rotted board,
then reach down to feed a snake
who opened wide his greedy jaws.
Though their hearts rushed like falling water,
they were careful not to make a sound.

The doctor said to kill the snake
would kill their daughter, too,
so the daddy took a piece of cypress
split with his own axe
and chock-full of the fragrance of summer,
of yellow leaves uncurled,
he nailed it over the floor
then stomped hard enough
to scare the devil back to Hell.

Without a looking glass of slanted eyes
to pull her from the table,
the girl began to savor biscuits and gravy,
grew the wild rose in her cheeks,
and caught the stars in her own eyes.

Shari Miller
NSU Alumna

Sylvia Johnson

Last night I talked to you,
Pounded my fist against the bar
And woke this morning with a bruise
The size of a lemon. It reminds me
Of the tiresome things I told you,
The way I slipped off my wedding ring
And flirted with a man whose grey eyes
Followed the line of my cheek
And shoulder, all the way down to my
Feet that tap-danced on the rungs
Of a stool. He left me sitting
And I turned to you, put my lips
Close to your ear and begged
You to be my friend. You said yes
And you said yes and I was never so happy.

T. L. Scott

Foot Freedom

As I walk barefoot on this carpet of velvet green,
My feet welcome the softness of its sheen.
Each toe luxuriates in this jungle of blades
Not looking forward to the time of year
When this rug of nature fades.

Enjoy feet! Feel the freshness of the dew!
In a few short months I'll cover you with shoes.

Rhonda Byers

Stepping Stones

A friend told me something not too long ago
About something I think maybe you should know
It dealt with life and things that would end
About steps in time that each lead to a friend
About stones that strew the path we all walk
and deals with words that weren't all talk
She told me then how each step I took
was like the next page in any good book
That without the first no other would follow
without each person some place would be hollow
She spoke of love and things that were true
of how old things led to the new
The steps she compared to experience passed
and talked of memories that would always last
Some steps she said would always be slick
and in my mind would never stick
While others were rough and cut like a knife
these she proposed would stay for life
As I stopped and pondered all that was said
many sad memories ran through my head
But along with this it came to mind
that happiness is what makes life kind
And to find happiness above it all
with some steps, must come a fall
So when it looks like a page isn't there
remember to slow down and proceed with care
For somewhere ahead is a step to take
and behind, a choice that we all must make
The steps we've taken we can't erase
but we can start back on the old home base
Smooth those stones that are too deeply cut
start anew, get out of the rut
Remember friends in an occasional prayer
and remember for you I'll always be there
So here is to what I've always known
you're my truest friend, you're my stepping stone.

LeAnn Gray

A Confessor's Song

Kneeling, pleading for spiritual support
Incense emits an aura of holiness.
A cleric makes judgment as if in court.
A sinner continues to confess.

Candlelight enhances concentration.
All is quiet, but a whisper faint.
A body kneels almost without sensation.
An angel listens, or perhaps a saint.

A Crucifix looks o'er a sorrow-filled being.
A confessor waits as if for execution.
A light appears, the naked eye unseeing.
A priest gives penance and absolution.

Jeffery Rivers

Spring Contest *Honorable Mention Poetry*

Ordination

The whole direction of my life
Had pointed to this day.
Somehow, somewhere a question came
In a strange, determined way.

“Who will go for me today?”
Isaiah had heard it too.
That question hammered at my will.
God had a task to do.

I waited for a miracle
To dramatically decide my fate.
Doubts and fears had power too —
Within a fiery debate.

On indecision’s circular path
I painfully groped my way.
And then a spark, a faltering yes,
It grew to a bright new day.

Struggles and timely scholarships
Studies that stretched my mind,
That painful process — maturing faith
Security left behind.

And now I stood in a crowded Church,
And heard the Bishop ask —
“Are you persuaded . . . truly called . . .
Will you faithfully fulfill this task?”

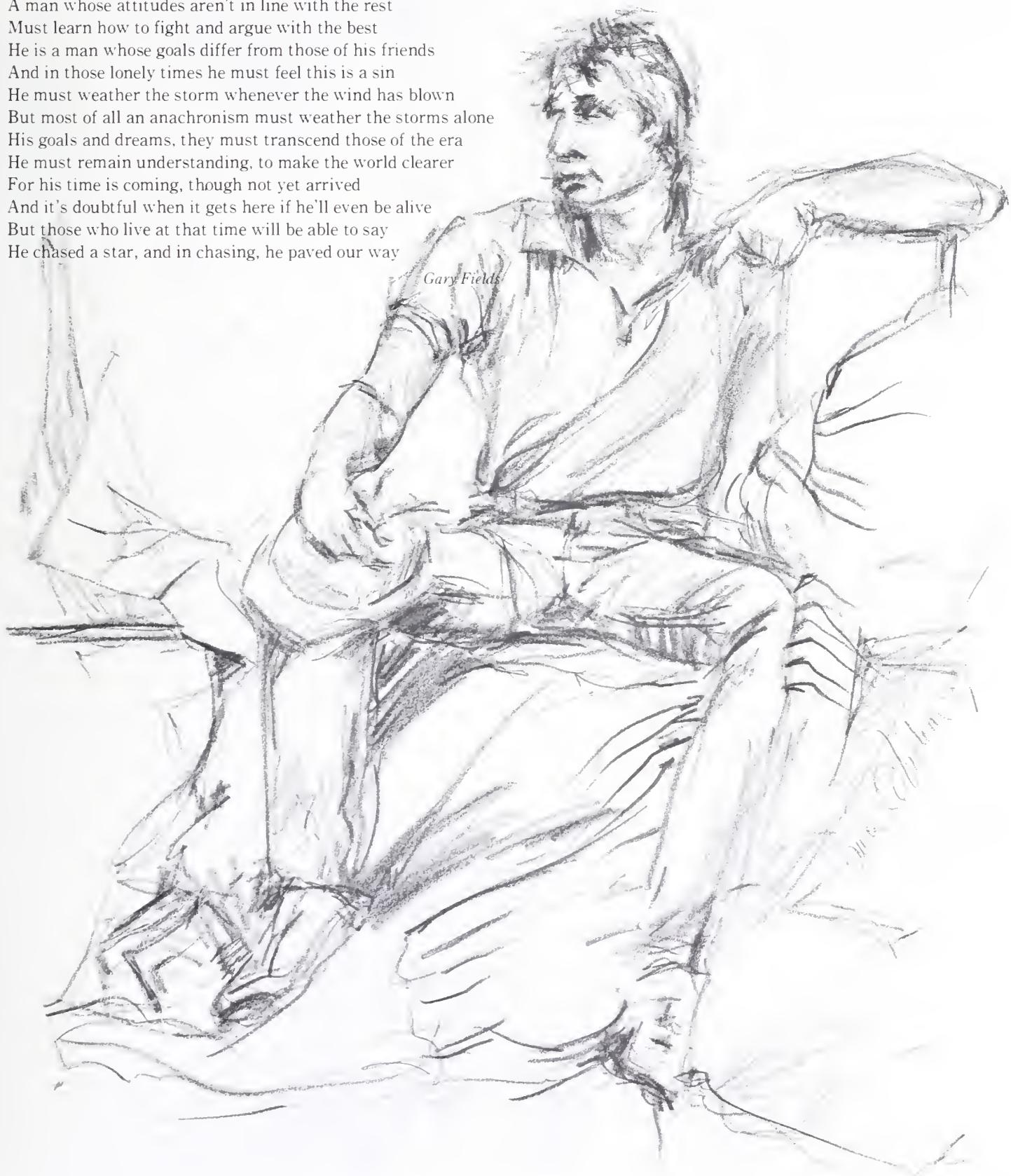
The Bishop’s hand on my trembling head,
Brought the coals of a cleansing fire.
My mind was purged, prepared, aflame
Filled with a new desire.

The doubts and fears persisted still.
But in a way I could not foresee
The affirmation is ringing still
“Here am I, O Lord, send me!”

Edward R. Thomas

The Anachronism

A man born out of time and out of place
Is a man born across the limits of time, of space
For he is an anachronism, born out of time
and fighting society will be a continuous climb
A man whose attitudes aren't in line with the rest
Must learn how to fight and argue with the best
He is a man whose goals differ from those of his friends
And in those lonely times he must feel this is a sin
He must weather the storm whenever the wind has blown
But most of all an anachronism must weather the storms alone
His goals and dreams, they must transcend those of the era
He must remain understanding, to make the world clearer
For his time is coming, though not yet arrived
And it's doubtful when it gets here if he'll even be alive
But those who live at that time will be able to say
He chased a star, and in chasing, he paved our way



Studley, pencil drawing by Laurie Wisdom, NSU Alumna

Star of the East IV

And I see you on the beach,
the whiteness of the sand turns the color
of your skin to toast.
You gurgle, laugh, and giggle as the waves
tickle your toes.
The power of the sea frightens you,
but does not deter you from the adventure.
After all, you have your protector and he
fearlessly leads you through the waves.
You call to me from my carefully
positioned place on the blanket . . .
But, seaweed and the murky unknown have never
appealed to me.
So, I sit and watch.
Later as you paw your way through the sand
and create fantasy castles with alligator
infested moats . . . you call again.
This time, I respond.
As I approach, the grains of sand stick
like powdered diamonds to your feet, legs, arms,
and those wonderously long dark braids that
trail in the sand, making tracks like those
of the gulls and sandpipers.
I pray for time to stop as we lie side by side
and let the waves wash like a down comforter
over our legs.
If it were in my power, I would keep you here,
no passage of time, no partings,
only our bodies, the sand, and the sea.

Kathleen Smith
NSU Faculty



Untitled pen and ink drawing by Leslie Anne Gregory

La Jolla Shores

Surf rolling
brings the smell of salt.
Cliffs always behind
reach for the sky.

The beach stretches
up and down the coast.
Gulls soar
screeching their delight.

Sun people
bake their bodies brown.
Children play —
they run, jump, splash and slide.

Surfers wait
to "hang ten" and "shoot the curl."
Time again
to paddle out and wait for the next "big one."

The sun slips
into the ocean farther West,
bringing darkness to
the beach scene at La Jolla Shores.

Steve Edwards

Sea Shadows

"My ship took the last humpbacked whale
from these waters."

Captain Nim turned stiffly from the yellowed
twentieth-century map:

"That was my profession — I attained highest
rank with the company.

Radical troublemakers nor gales interfered with
my efficiency.

Yes, *Meredith* took the last humpbacked whale
from the open seas.

We scouted the ocean to find them — sonar blipped
on subs, sea labs, but

No whale. Days passed into weeks before
their shapes appeared on screen.

The calf was hurt — that is how we
found them.

The old bull turned to protect his pup, and
our cannon shot true.

Then the cow fell, and finally the calf.

Last remnant of an old school.

What's all the fuss about, now? They've got
those whale on video.

Tapes of their eerie songs — strange, I hear
them in my dreams."

The captain sat heavily and sighed at me:

"Oh, they were magnificent creatures. Great, huge,
and yet they cut the water

Like dolphins. But they're on tapes you know,
in the archives.

I don't understand all the fuss."

Captain Nim showed me grey photos of the *Meredith*
Her deck slick with whale blood.

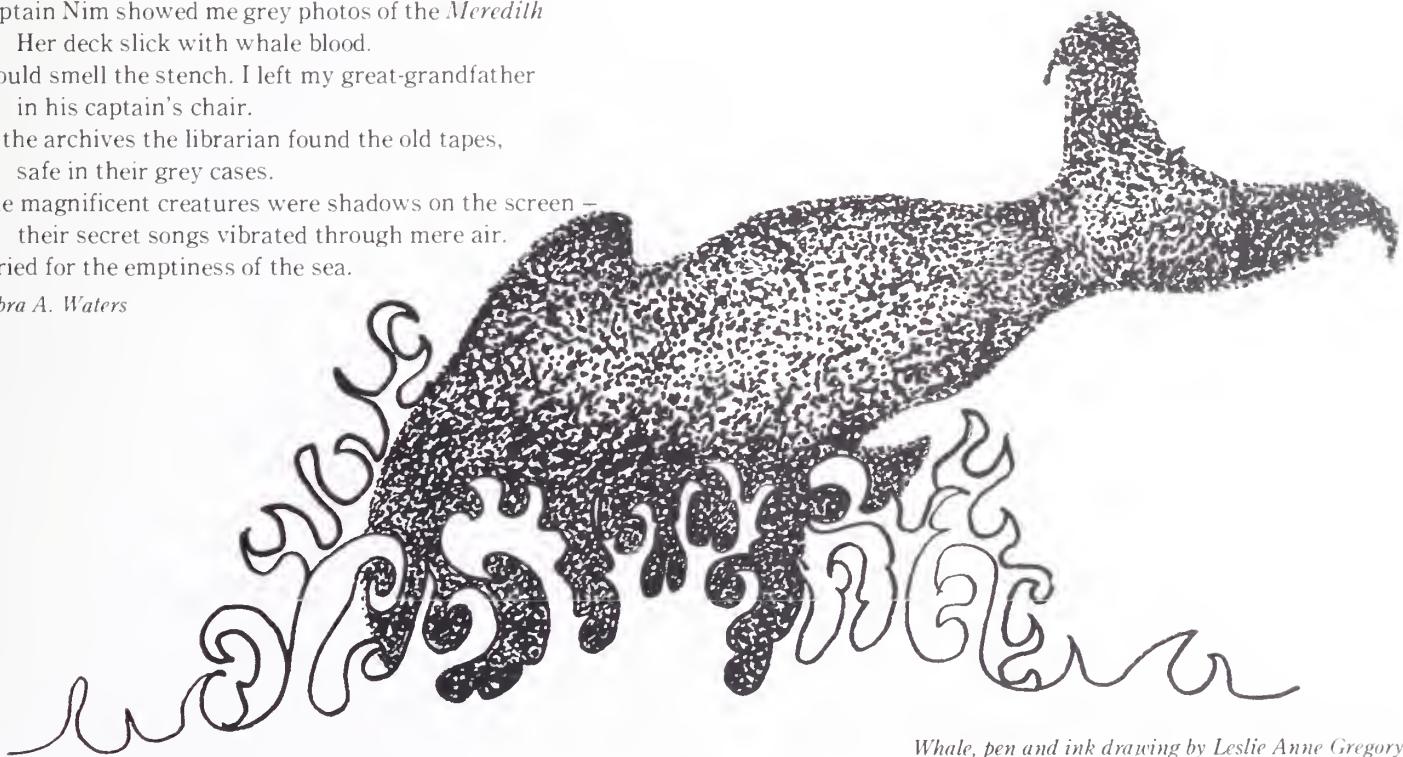
I could smell the stench. I left my great-grandfather
in his captain's chair.

At the archives the librarian found the old tapes,
safe in their grey cases.

The magnificent creatures were shadows on the screen —
their secret songs vibrated through mere air.

I cried for the emptiness of the sea.

Debra A. Waters



Whale, pen and ink drawing by Leslie Anne Gregory

Water After The Rainbow

Sand castle memories offer no evenings. In Autumn,
Sipping diet cokes in innocence of years, where stolen
Kisses under moonlit skies won't buy back times never shared,
On Saturday morning walks along ocean trails all wet,
With first frost dew broken clean by breaking light playing tag.
Our reappearing shadows chase others. Our cool Falling
Chills into adulthood winters, cries for fires. Against night

We fight. Then write away slow hours staring darkness into
Another dawn. We part, lips dry with new found words, lacking
Expression next to plastic shovels lost with plastic pails
Catching overcast memories dripping rain past chances.

Post cards, seasonally recorded in care of parents,
Wonder what will become of this one so young. And only
Yesterday an errant kiss was stolen not long before
It was quickly placed and missed. By now the tide is changing,

Washing sand as farewell waves water after the rainbow.

*Allen M. Ford
NSU Alumnus*

Railroading Ties From Louisiana

From other minds steaming within their own
Ingenuity towards lesser thoughts
Past empty stations now in Natchitoches,
My thoughts run loose, run fast, run like wild trains
That aren't quite free. On time. They travel down
Familiar tracks worn by other, smaller
Lines. Wheels rail Southern comforts Dixie Class
On yesterday past creole good boy red
Neck ways. Politics my mind can't track. Back

In California, where splintered timbers
Found on gravel bedded rural routes won't
Wash under salt water, where bare feet bridge
Coastal highways, my thoughts remain hobo
Wrapped around desires held in signal stops,
Crossings, miles from pecan groves sheltering
My house, my cat's home, my creosote ties.
Another whistle blows . . . Trains are much too
Slow. Into conversation voids, my thoughts

Ride empty. On time. Too soon, they will go.

*Allen M. Ford
NSU Alumnus*

S. F. Rendition No. 1

Sailor lies alive
On the rocks greasy
Sins slip washing salt
For ever were they
To mortify this
City laundry stiff
Out lines stain shadows
On ocean lines view
Different Golden
Gate winds touch cleaner
Sheets, streets, lives mixing
Gutter colognes with
Oil skin odors near
Lobsters' boil, the wharf
Where, as the grey wet
Tourists snap crab shots,
Fog smothers it all.

*Allen M. Ford
NSU Alumnus*

Baby Bunting's Retrocession

Baby Bunting

protected from autumnal chills
hand-bundled with loving care by Mama
Stood by sea's shore, waiting for the tide.
Green-eyed ingenue squinting into the wind.
Along the strand frolicked Jack Rabbett,
Who begged her to play.
She declined unhappily.

Mama would be so upset were they to come home wet . . .
Bunting Baby and Bunny

Paw in paw,
Strolled, house bound, against the wind

Leslie Anne Gregory



By the Sea, pen and ink drawing by Leslie Anne Gregory

Last Destiny

The old man was asleep when the dog started scratching at his door. He stubbed his toe in the dark, but he didn't care. The old man knew the dog must have caught something to eat and he hadn't eaten in a week. After the war, the old man's life had changed considerably. He had given up his desk job and moved into the swamps to become a trapper. The old man still wore his .45 and only took it off at night to put it under his pillow while he slept.

The dog had caught a skinny little possum. It dropped the possum on the porch and fleas jumped off the limp body. The old man produced a pocket knife and slit the possum's belly wide open. He then ripped out the guts and began the long job of pulling and cutting the greasy skin off the meat. He threw the meat in a black pot and started a fire. The old man knew his icebox was empty, but he looked anyway, and then he poured some water in the pot and set it on the fire.

The old man then sat down and began to whittle, as he had for months, on a large piece of oak. When the possum was ready, he took half of it and gave it to the dog. The old man ate his half in silence, but he was thinking how he and the dog were starving to death.

The old man hadn't been much of a success as a trapper. He often thought if he hadn't lost half his right leg in the war, he might still be married and living in the city, but the old man didn't care now; he only wanted to be left alone, to die in peace. That night, while he was



Smoke House, black and white photograph by Andy Nelson

whittling, the old man thought how he probably would have starved three years ago, if one night the dog hadn't started scratching at his door. When he reached the door that night, the dog had a big fat swamp rabbit. In the last year, the dog had stopped catching any rabbits, and very few possums. He knew the dog was getting old, too, and the rabbits weren't getting any slower.

When he finished whittling that night, he looked at what he had carved. The carving resembled a cross and it said: JOHN BROOKS AND HIS DOG. John Brooks thought how that was the first time he had admitted

the dog was his. He never knew where the mangy mutt came from, but he was John's only friend. As he went to bed he thought maybe their problems would soon be over. When he got up the next morning, the old man laid the cross on his bed and searched the house until he found a ragged rubber ball. He was sitting on the porch when the pains in his stomach started again. He got up, and with his dog following him, shuffled his way down the path to a little farm pond. The ice on the pond was thin, but John and his dog weren't overweight. He reached down and patted his dog before he produced the ball and slid it across the ice. The dog went sliding after the ball and then there was just a hole in the ice where a dog had been. The old man got as much of a running start as he could with his wooden leg and went sliding across the ice, and if there had been someone there later, they would

By Drew Files

have seen two holes in the middle of the ice on the old pond.

Murder Mystery

Death comes
on a front porch swing,
or in the garden.
They took the Butler's body,
but not his
clothes . . .
Where he went
nobody knows
It took the Butler's clothes,
but left his body . . .
And so it goes.
Nobody knows
just who or what it
was.

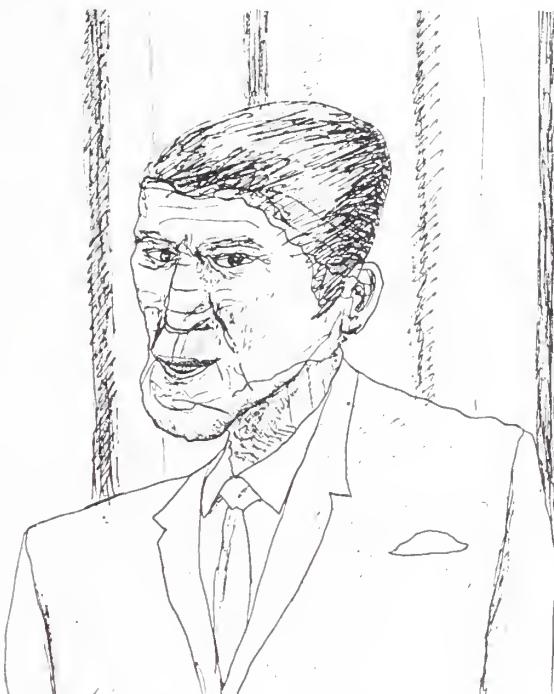
Susan E. Dollar

Coverup

Somewhere in the news today,
Some information came my way —
“Seventy fresh-cut flower bouquets
Adorn the White House every day.”

Somewhere in my mind today,
A question will not go away —
“Does flower fragrance in array
Keep poverty's awful stench away?”

Edward R. Thomas



Untitled pen and ink drawing by Bob Tooker

Fall Contest Honorable Mention Poetry

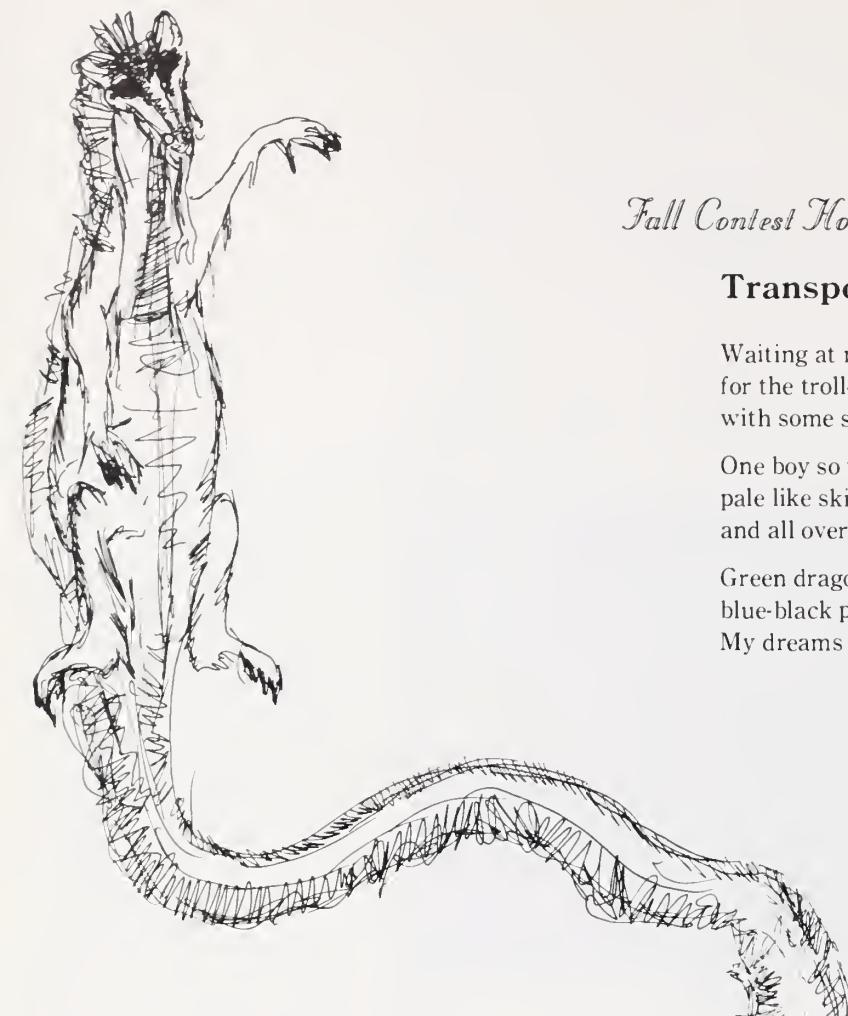
Pervasive Gossip

Did you hear about . . .?
Don't tell anyone
I'm sworn to secrecy.

Did you know that . . .?
Keep your lips sealed.
I promised I wouldn't tell.

Have you heard about . . .?
You have! Well!
So much for promises.
Some people can't keep a secret.

Rhonda Byers



Fall Contest Honorable Mention Poetry

Transportation

Waiting at midnight
for the trolley
with some strange creatures.

One boy so thin and
pale like skimmed milk
and all over his body tattoos.

Green dragons, red hearts,
blue-black panthers.
My dreams on bare arms and legs.

Debra A. Waters

Fall Contest Honorable Mention Poetry

A Collection Of Haikus

Winds sings through the trees . . .
teaching the birds a new hymn
of wooden sunlight.

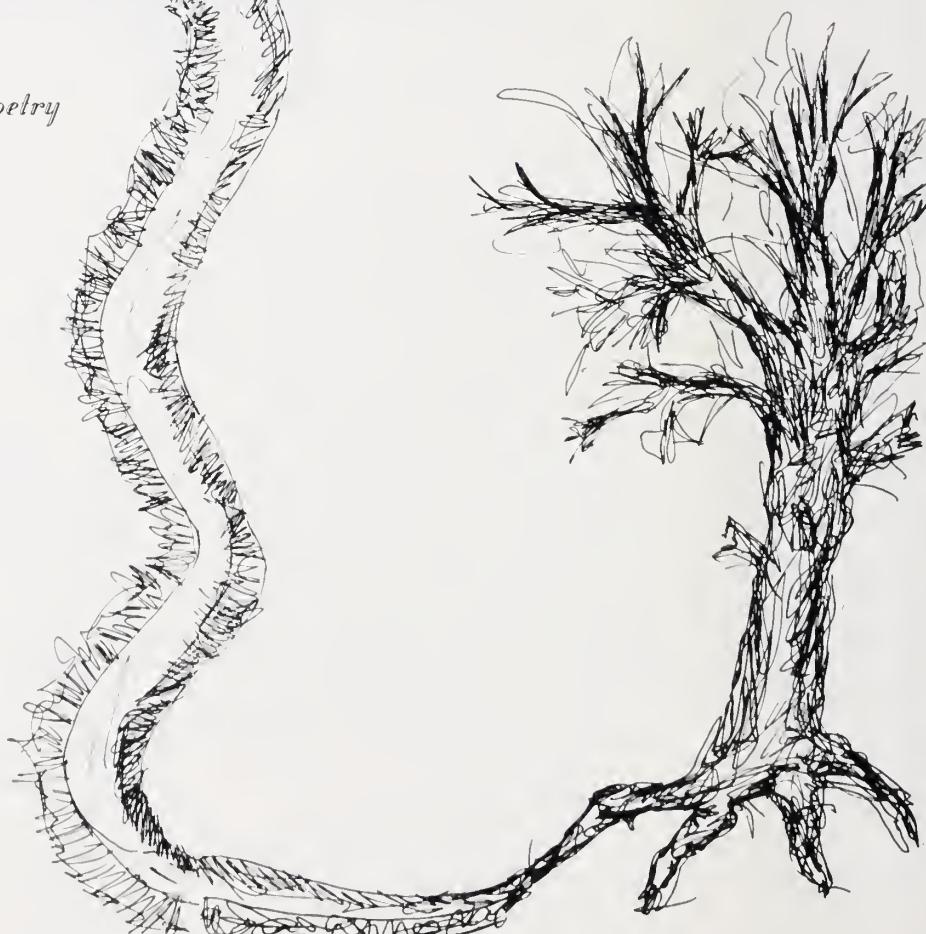
Fluttering oak leaves
Dancing in the breeze, making
Music at evening . . .

A spider sleeping
in the center of this empty web,
trusting her design.

A floating balloon
slips from the grasp of a child —
the mystical moon.

Deep in the calmest
wood, not one leaf dares to stir . . .
Someone is afraid.

Sharon K. Hammel



Les On Monday Mornings, pen and ink drawing by Leslie Anne Gregory

Everything to Lose

Won't the years slip quickly by
If I settle down with one?

Lose my true identity
Of the girl that's on the run?

Kiss a man off to work
To watch the soaps and cry?
Why should I put up with that?
Why, damn it, why?

Why don't I feel satisfied
With children all around?
Someone had to grab my feet
To pull me to the ground.
I was happy being me
And running my own show
Now I'm pulled ten different ways
With no room left to grow.

I guess I'll keep pretending
I'm happy with my role
Changing diapers, scrubbing floors
Kiss my man hello.
Someday, though, I'll leave these walls
And take a summer cruise
I might find myself again
I've got everything to lose.

Terri Barnhouse

Such A Little Thing

Less than you have offered —
Just the begging of what you
Have so lately promised!
I could have told him as much
Myself,

But he would not have believed
me.

It is not because I won't —
It is because I absolutely
can't,
But it is such a little thing.

Angela L. Crittle

At Least The Memories Remain

I look in your eyes and see you smile
and it makes me feel good for a little while
but then I look again and see you cry
Although you try so hard to pretend
I see that every now and then
a teardrop falls and I wonder why
But just remember that after the rain
a rainbow comes to hide the pain
And although it must soon leave you
at least the memories remain
And then I take your hand in mine
and it feels so warm that it makes me shine
but then I hold you close and feel you tremble
Although you try to hold up strong
I know that inside you something is wrong
and I tell you that life could be so simple
If you just remember that after the rain
a rainbow comes to hide the pain
and although it must soon leave you
at least the memories remain

Richard Constance

Spring Contest First Place Photography



Plantation House In The Country, black and white photograph by Andy Nelson

My Turn, Sister

NELLIE, in her late 60's

EDNA, in her early 60's

DOT, in her mid 50's

This play is to be performed with a Mississippi Delta dialect, which is suggested.

It is early afternoon. As the curtain rises, we see NELLIE and DOT seated on the front porch of an old but well-kept home in the Mississippi Delta.

EDNA enters through the door which leads to the rest of the house. As she enters, DOT passes her and goes toward the door.

- EDNA: Where you off to?
DOT: To watch the Match Game.
EDNA: I declare, I don't know why you watch that game.
DOT: 'Cause they always got some good guessers on there. (*she exits*)
EDNA: I don't know how that Match Game is gonna set with Daddy. What time is it?
NELLIE: Quarter after one.
EDNA: As the World Turns is on. He won't like that. You know, Lisa and Bob are right in the middle of that custody suit, and just any day now they're gonna find out about it.
NELLIE: How do you know so much about As the World Turns?
EDNA: (*unenthusiastically*) Every night durin' supper I get filled in on what happened. Right after his toast and before his coffee.
DOT: (*standing in the door frame*) I hate that coffee you fix. You can see the grounds in the bottom of the cup it's so weak. I could make better coffee'n that when I's thirteen years old.
EDNA: Don't drink it then.
DOT: I don't.
EDNA: One of these days you're gonna forget to pack that coffee of yours when you come over here and you know what I'm gonna do?
DOT: I bet I can guess.
EDNA: I'm gonna laugh myself silly. I wish you didn't have to be so dad-blame picky about ever'thing.
DOT: Well, you don't have to get so upset about it and pounce all over me.
NELLIE: I thought you's watchin' the Match Game.
DOT: Daddy ran me out. He was in the middle of one of those soap operas. Which one is it now?
EDNA & NELLIE: As the World Turns.
DOT: You know, Edna, you really should encourage him to watch other things. Those soap operas are gettin' more vulgar ever' day.
EDNA: It's not like he hasn't seen it before. How 'bout I'll just go tell him to go out and jog around the block a time or two? That way, he'd be gone all day and half the night, too.
DOT: I'm just not gonna say another thing to you. I come home to visit and how am I treated? Like somebody's old dog.
- EDNA: Well, I'm certainly not gonna sit here and listen to you rattle. I'm gonna go fix me a cup of *my* coffee.
DOT: You do that. Oh, and check on Daddy while you're up.
EDNA: Don't I always? (*she exits*)
DOT: I don't know why she invites me over here and then treats me like she does. Does she do this to you all the time?
NELLIE: She's very protective of Daddy. He's somethin' she can depend on. That must be kinda nice sometimes.
DOT: Just what do you mean by that?
NELLIE: You know what I mean.
DOT: Well, it certainly didn't sound like a slip of the tongue to me. Don't tell me you'n L.C.'s still havin' trouble.
NELLIE: Alright, I won't.
DOT: But I know you are. Come on, you can tell me all about it.
NELLIE: You know all there is to know.
DOT: Well, haven't you done anything for him? Given him some kinda pills or somethin'?
NELLIE: Until he goes to those AA meetings, I just cain't help him any more. (*Pause*) I've pushed him, I've let him alone . . . I declare, I don't know what to do anymore.
DOT: Daddy'd just die if he knew his oldest daughter was married to a man like him. Just die. Thank God Momma's not alive to hear about it. She's probably rolled over a hundred times in her grave as it is.
NELLIE: L. C. doesn't mean to hurt anything. He's a good man at heart, Dot. You know he is.
DOT: Good for nothin'! I certainly wouldn't put up with him. Me'n the kids have always had all we've ever needed. Now we move around a lot, but Phil's always provided for us.
EDNA: (*entering with two cups of coffee on a tray*) Thought you might want a cup of coffee, Nellie. I spared you the heartburn, Dot.
DOT: I don't know why you're so upset about the dad-blame coffee. (*Silence*)
EDNA: You don't have to quit talkin' just 'cause I came out here. (*Silence*)

By Elizabeth Corley

NELLIE: Lemme tell you a joke I heard from Ernestine last week. (*she laughs*) There was this doctor who was new in town, and he was makin' his rounds at the hospital, meetin' ever'body. But this doctor had a problem. See, he couldn't ever remember anybody's name. So he went to this psychiatrist, you know, to find out what he could do. And the psychiatrist told him to associate somethin' about that person with their name. Well, he thought that was easy enough, so the next day, he was makin' rounds and he met a Mr. Hummock. And the doctor thought, "What a strange name. How'm I gonna remember that? Oh, I'll remember Hummock 'cause he's got a big stomach. Hummock, stomach." So, the next day, the doctor comes back to the same room, smiles real big, and says, "How're you doin' today, Mr. Kelly?" (*she laughs*) Get it? Kelly, belly?

(*No one responds. Silence.*)

How's Miss Mamie, Edna?

EDNA: Well, you know she's miserable out there at that nursin' home. Her kids don't care anything about her any more.

NELLIE: They never did. Does Joyce still go out there to do her hair?

EDNA: I don't know. She did Miss Dovey's hair when it got done.

NELLIE: Well, did she do it, I guess, when she died?

EDNA: Probably. Because when they'd take her to the beauty shop that's where they'd taken her.

NELLIE: She used to go to the nursin' home to do hair at one time . . . and then she quit.

EDNA: You know, the circles in town take turns takin' kind of a birthday gift to folks out at the nursin' home, and it was my circle's time to bring them somethin', so I found a box of soap around the house . . .

NELLIE: All of you take a gift, is that what you do?

EDNA: Well, four of us took gifts and the others made cakes.

NELLIE: Mmm . . . didn't want to make a cake — I don't blame you.

DOT: Why not? I was bakin' cakes when I's thirteen years old.

EDNA: So I found that soap that was sittin' in there in the cabinet, and there were eights bars, and Marcelle said she thought she'd divide it between four of the ladies out there. I think Sarah Manson's about the only needy one out there.

NELLIE: And she thinks I'm you ever' time I go out there.

EDNA: I know it.

NELLIE: She just has a fit over me. Edna! Edna! Edna!

DOT: Who says that?

NELLIE: Sarah Manson. And I told her one time I wasn't Edna, but it didn't register — she still calls me Edna.

EDNA: Well, you be nice to her. (*she laughs, pause.*) How do y'think Daddy'd do in a place like that?

DOT: Like what?

NELLIE: Edna! I cain't believe you'd even think that!

DOT: Think what?

EDNA: I was only askin' a simple question.

DOT: Would somebody please tell me what this conversation is all about?

EDNA: I'm just sayin' that supposin' somethin' happened to me and Daddy was left here by himself. You know he couldn't take care of himself, much less run that shop by himself.

DOT: This is crazy talk, Edna. Nothin's gonna happen to you.

NELLIE: You know, I don't like this coffee very much, either. I think I'm gonna go get me a cup of tea.

DOT: I'll help you.

(*They exit. Edna begins to make an effort to straighten the porch — stack newspapers, fluff pillows, etc. She looks around, stops herself, and sits back down. Nellie enters.*)

EDNA: Where's your tea?

NELLIE: I decided I didn't want any.

EDNA: Here lately you've been actin' awful peculiar. I think you need to go see Dr. Raymond.

NELLIE: I don't need to see Dr. Raymond. I think you oughta tell me if you're sick.

EDNA: What?

NELLIE: The way you's talkin' about "if somethin' happened to you . . ."

EDNA: That doesn't mean I'm sick. I meant if *anything* happened to me.

NELLIE: Like what? What could possibly happen to you, Edna?

DOT: (*rushes in*) Edna, go tell Daddy that he *cannot* exercise with Richard Simmons! He's tryin' to get up outa that chair and do side sustraddle hops!

NELLIE: My Heavens!

& EDNA: Good Lord!

EDNA: I told him not to do that last week when he tried to do knee bends and rolled over and hit his head on the couch . . . (*she exits*)

NELLIE: You still takin' that exercise class?

DOT: Heavens no. The only reason I's goin' is because Barbra bought me a membership to that expensive club she goes to.

NELLIE: I guess she's there ever' day.

DOT: Yeah, she's got that beauty pageant comin' up and she's not eatin' a thing. She's gonna starve herself to death. You know, this is the national finals she's goin' to. Phil'n me and the boys are gonna drive up there to Denver and watch her.

NELLIE: Um hmm.

DOT: You just wouldn't believe how expensive those long dresses are. She's got a closet full of them that she's only worn once.

NELLIE: I bet Phil's fit to be tied.

DOT: Naw, he's proud of her — he just never says so. You know I won a beauty contest when I's thirteen years old.

NELLIE: You did not.

DOT: I did so, just ask Edna when she comes in here. Edna!

EDNA: (*from inside*) Would you just hold your horses, I'm tryin' to settle him down in here!

DOT: (*to Edna*) Turn on The Price is Right — that'll calm him down.

NELLIE: Edna's the only one Daddy'll ever listen to. I'll come over here and it's like he doesn't even know me.

DOT: You're imagining things, Nellie.

NELLIE: I am not. I think he thinks Edna's Momma sometimes.

DOT: Why's that?

NELLIE: I don't know. She acts more and more like her ever' day.

DOT: You driven out to the cemetery lately?

NELLIE: I try to get out there ever' once in awhile.

DOT: Do they keep it any better than they used to?

NELLIE: Well, you know when they mow the grass out there they just mow right over all the pot plants and flowers that's in the way. Just seems like a waste to even put them out there.

DOT: It's the thought, Nellie. When was the last time you put flowers on Momma's grave?

NELLIE: That is beside the point.

DOT: I don't think it is. I'm just gonna go right down there to the TG&Y and get some flowers before I leave here. I'm not gonna have her neglected by this family — she did too much for us for you to just pretend like she never existed, much less that she was your Momma. How'd you like for your kids to just forget about you after you's dead?

NELLIE: You're the one who's soundin' more like Momma ever'day. Just like she's speakin' ever' word you say.

DOT: Well good. I'm proud to be like my Momma. You should try to be.

EDNA: (*entering*) I don't know how long he's gonna sit there. (*Pause*)

DOT: Edna, tell Nellie that I won a beauty contest when I's thirteen years old.

EDNA: I don't remember it, Dot.

DOT: I can't believe you don't remember that I won the Little Miss Catfish contest and I wore that purdy little white lace dress from the Sears & Roebuck Momma bought me.

NELLIE: I wonder why they never say Roebuck anymore?

DOT: Well, I *was* too scared to go back up there and get my trophy — but I won it anyway. You can ask Daddy, he'll tell you.

EDNA: Dot, Daddy can't remember what he did yesterday, much less somethin' that happen fifty years ago.

DOT: I am *not* sixty-three years old! You're getting your own age confused with mine, Sister. I am fifty-two years old . . . plus two.

EDNA: Well, none of us are gettin' any younger.

DOT: You're always so pessimistic, Edna. I declare, I don't know why anybody wants to be around you.

EDNA: I know of at least one person who doesn't think I'm such a bore.

DOT: Who, Daddy? He probably doesn't even know who you are.

EDNA: I'm not talkin' about Daddy.

DOT: Then who in the world are you talkin' about? You just want me to beg you to tell me, don't you?

EDNA: Well, I wasn't gonna tell you about it . . . but since you insist on knowin', I will. I went on a date last week.

NELLIE: You didn't tell me, Edna!

DOT: You went out and kicked up your heels and left our poor Daddy here all by himself? Who do you think you are?

EDNA: It was after he'd had his supper, taken his bath, watched Sanford & Son, and been asleep for two hours.

DOT: I cain't believe you're so careless! Anything could've happened to him here all by himself.

EDNA: You know he never wakes up once he's asleep.

NELLIE: Who was it with?

DOT: She left your Daddy here in the middle of the night, and all you can say is "Who was it with?" Why, I knew better'n that when I's thirteen years old!

NELLIE: I don't care what you did when you's thirteen years old! Just sit there and be quiet for a change. Who was it with Edna?

EDNA: Charlie Turner.

NELLIE: You don't mean it! What'd you do?

EDNA: (*teasingly*) That's my business.

NELLIE: I heard that new Cadillac of his is really somethin'! Come on, what'd you do?

EDNA: We drove over to Isola and . . .

DOT: You drove all the way over to Isola in the middle of the night? You haven't got bat brains!

NELLIE: Dot, I'm gonna have to take you down to the new Burger King they just opened here. I bet you didn't even know they'd built one.

DOT: You cannot change the subject. (*to Edna*) Who do you think you are galavanting all over the country while our Daddy is left here alone to fend for himself?

EDNA: I am a woman who hasn't been on a date since *she* was thirteen years old!

DOT: You have responsibilities here. You think of those before you decide to roam off into the wild blue yonder with the Lone Ranger in his brand new Cadillac!

NELLIE: Dot . . .

EDNA: Would you listen to what I have to say for once in your life?

DOT: For once? All I ever do when I come here is listen to all your problems. You don't know what problems are! Try raisin' three kids — puttin' up with their fightin' and bickerin' and pickin' up and movin' ever' year or two. Try that! But of course you cain't understand that . . . you've been able to stay here your whole life and enjoy your Daddy ever' day . . . to take care of him . . .

EDNA: That's it! Don't you hear what you just said? Ever' day . . . take care of Daddy . . . but of course you wouldn't understand that — you have your kids and your husband . . .

DOT: Oh, you couldn't possibly know . . .

EDNA: I wish I did!
(*Silence*)

NELLIE: There's somethin' I wanna tell you, Edna. I've kept it from you because I knew you wouldn't know what to say . . . or maybe you'd tell Daddy about it. You see me ever'day, smilin' and always happy . . . you don't know that I'm really not . . . and I'm not sick, either . . .

DOT: You know, I was in bed with the doctor just last week.

EDNA: What did you say?

NELLIE & DOT: I said . . .

DOT: . . . I was in bed with the doctor. I was sick with a chest cold, Silly.

EDNA: Nellie, I told you that Dr. Raymond can look at you. He'll give you some pills for whatever's botherin' you.

NELLIE: I don't need pills. It's L.C.

EDNA: L.C. needs pills? Send *him* to Dr. Raymond.

NELLIE: I'm tryin'. Not Dr. Raymond, though. (*Pause*) L.C. drinks, Edna.

EDNA: I know he drinks, Nellie. Why are you bringin' that up?

DOT: She doesn't know? You tolle me about it . . .

EDNA: What does L.C.'s drinkin' have to do with you seein' Dr. Raymond?

NELLIE: I told you I'm not seein' Dr. Raymond.

DOT: L.C. drinks too much, Edna. And Nellie is tryin' to get him some help at those Anonymous meetin's. You know, when you go there and listen to ever'body stand up and say that they drink too much.

EDNA: L.C. doesn't drink too much. You're always imagining things, Nellie. Like that time when you thought there was a burglar in the house, and it turned out to be L.C. walkin' in his sleep.

NELLIE: Goin' to get a drink. After I was asleep.

EDNA: I declare, you're soundin' more like Momma ever' day.

DOT: I'm gonna go watch the TV with Daddy. (*starts to leave*)

EDNA: While you're in there, tell him I'm leavin'.

DOT: (*stops*) What did you say?

EDNA: You heard what I said.

NELLIE: Edna, you cain't mean that. Your family's here . . .

EDNA: My family's out there somewhere . . . maybe . . .

NELLIE: . . . the store . . .

EDNA: . . . I have to find out. You've had your chance . . .

NELLIE: . . . Daddy . . .

EDNA: . . . there's gotta be more to life than an occasional date with Charlie in his Cadillac. I'm gonna find it.

DOT: You're an old woman, Edna.

EDNA: All the more reason for me to go.

NELLIE: But Daddy . . .

EDNA: Daddy won't even miss me. He cain't remember from one day to the next.

DOT: What are we supposed to do, put him in that nursin' home with Joyce and old Harold, Sarah Manson, and all those other kooks?

EDNA: No, you take him. I've done it for forty years. I think it's about time you took your turn.

NELLIE: Edna, I just tried to tell you what a hard time I'm havin' just tryin' to hold myself together.

EDNA: So am I.

DOT: I'm goin' to get some coffee. Anybody else want any?

EDNA: Oh, Dot . . . check on Daddy while you're up.

(*Dot looks at her and exits*)

NELLIE: Edna, this is serious. I don't think you believe me.

EDNA: Oh, I believe you.

NELLIE: Then why are you doin' this to me?

EDNA: Not just to you, Nellie. You and Dot have had a full life, doin' what you've always wanted. I haven't. I love my Daddy . . . I love who he used to be. Time slips away, Nellie. I want to stop it . . . before I'm too old to care. I trust your judgment about Daddy. I'm gonna tell him I'm goin' on a little trip. That's all he needs to know. (*Pause*) I'm gonna go get my things now.

(*Nellie is left alone for a moment. Then Dot enters.*)

DOT: Where's Edna? She didn't really leave, did she? I think she's gone temporarily insane. You know, I've read about people who get that way. Just all of a sudden, nutty as a fruitcake.

NELLIE: I don't think she's kiddin', Dot. I hope she is, though.

DOT: Oh, she's just doin' this to make us come over here more often, or bring her somethin' nicer for Christmas or her birthday . . . that's all. I tell you, she'll do anything to get attention.

(*Silence*)

EDNA: (*enters with two bags and her purse*) You hear the one about the old maid? Nobody knew when she died. Just found her there, days later. They put her in the cemetery . . . felt sorry for her and put a few plastic carnations out there. Next day the man mowed right over them. Pretty funny, huh? (*she laughs*)

DOT: You'll do anything for attention, won't you? Alright, we get the point . . . and we promise to come more often, and buy you something besides Windsong dustin' powder for your birthday. You can just put all that stuff up now.

EDNA: I'm not jokin', Dot. (*she laughs*) You know, I feel like one of those women on the soap operas who leaves her husband. Only I haven't got one! So . . . I'm leavin' you. Try to understand that I've got to do this . . . for me. For the time I have left. (*pause*) Please take care of Daddy. (*she exits*)

DOT: (*calling after her*) What about the time I have left? Don't I count? You cain't just leave us here . . . you cain't do it!

(*Silence*)

NELLIE: I'll go check on Daddy. (*she exits*)

DOT: I think I'll go to the TG&Y and get those flowers now. She'll be here by the time I get back . . . I just know it. Just know it.



Untitled black and white photograph by Bob Tooke



Pen and ink drawing by James Webb

People Magazine's Woman Of The Year

I'm a Fitzgerald girl/woman
With De Kooning statuesque
gliding on a Hemingway moon.

This is such a fun game,
all the fanfare and shame;
I'll not give it up too soon.

The wine and the song fit along
with the nights of endless pleasure.
Paris, Sète, bullfighters and writers,
I take them all in my measure.

My friends call to say they're in St. Tropez,
running free on the pebbles of time.
I drink in Montparnasse; my thoughts twist and toss,
repeating this ridiculous rhyme.

I see, though, I am wasted, spent,
dried up as a flower in the sun,
and lost in insane banality
on an endless search for the fun.

Upon the ash heap, I steep,
and sing my lullaby;
days grow old and pass untold,
No need to wonder why.

Susan E. Dollar



Susan At Thirty, pen and ink drawing by Leslie Anne Gregory

On Designer Fashions

Status is for sale,
And always has been.
High price tags are cheap substitutes
For stature,
And always will be.

*Jim W. Dollar
NSU Alumnus*

To Her Lusty Lover

Oh, my lusty one, cool your fire,
You frighten me with your wild desire.
My manner is virginal and so shy,
You 'rouse thoughts that embarrass; why
Do I feel a harlot, for 'tis not for me
To tread the Ganges shore with thee.
You wish to lead me down paths of lust
Or, you say, my honor will turn to dust.
Time is against us, ticking away
The minutes, hours, the speeding day.
Your enemy, Time, now haunts me too,
and to hold him still, we cannot do.
To love gently, tenderly, we haven't days
To give love time for honorable ways.

Scare me not but hold me tight
'Gainst body warm, vibrant with light.
You've won me with talk of lonely graves,
Cold; dust, ashes, worms, Death's knaves.
Chase 'way the visions in my mind
With eyes that glow, arms that bind.
Your inner fire is so contagious,
Makes me light-hearted, warm; courageous
Enough to accept what you offer me.
Courage to lose my treasured virginity.

So, my love, come lie instead,
With me upon this soft green bed
Of grass, and let our bodies unite
As you, firstly, wished we might.
Thus, united as nature intended
We've conquered Time, upended.
For at this moment, to us unseeming,
Time has lost, has no more meaning.

Rebecca Elaine Hale



The Washerwoman's Song

I.

I sit
in silent wonderment.
The day has come back new.
freshly washed.
cleanly laundered.
starched
and smoothly pressed.
The cleaning lady of the sky
doesn't mind her chores.
Her days are never bored
by endless tasks.
New mornings
and soft evenings
are got the same —
in soft content
of what she does.
I wish my attitude
were more like hers.

II.

Or maybe all of her
is not such bliss.
What of the hours,
the days, sometimes
the weeks,
of stormy interludes;
the hiss of rains
on overheated streets,
the sluicing of the cobwebs
from the clouds
by great downfalls
of spring and autumn storms?
Does she too use these
to wash away her anger
at her chores.
the never-ending tasks
of mothering nature.
filling out the forms
that say she does not work:
she only keeps the house
for all mankind?

Patricia Quayhagen

Where The Children Play

Daisies grow wild
Where all the children play.
I know so myself
'Cause that's where I gathered my bouquet.

Innocence and Mischief
All combined in one;
Ah! Life was so sweet then,
And radiant was the sun.

Frolicking in laughter,
Joyous and gay;
We played together,
Then went our own way.

Daisies grow wild
Where all the children play.
My credentials are excellent,
I have my withered flowers on display.

Wanda Huhner

And So It Goes

I will never say, "I told you so," or
"Because I said so and that's all there is to it."
Not me . . . oh, no.
Those annoying intrusions and trite sayings
will never pass from my lips.
Not me.
I will remember every slight,
every put-down, or put-in-my-place.
Not me.
And then came the day when I heard the words
escape from my mouth.
And I looked down and saw
my mother's hand . . .
growing out of my sleeve.

*Kathleen E. Smith
NSU Faculty*

Sitting on the Third Story Window Ledge, Waiting For My Friend

He is seven.
He stands across the street
and strains his neck to yell
to me, "D'ya havva quartuh?"
I have one he won't get.
His head, like the tree-tops,
looks oversized. A mushroom cap on a matchstick
He may topple over into the street.
Hands on hips, he stands firm
and waits for the money.
His blue eyes remain steady.
Blond-white bunny.
I would like to steal
him from his mother.

T. L. Scott

Spring Contest Third Place Photography



Untitled black and white photograph by Michelle Jackson

Fall Contest First Place Short Story

PET PROBLEM

by

R. Mark Rachal



Untitled pencil drawing by Chirre Kraatz

“Hello, son, can I help you with something?” About eight years old, short blond hair, thin as a rail, wearing faded overalls and sneakers — the boy that walked into Baker’s Pet Supplies reminded Mr. Baker of Wheezer from the Little Rascals short features. The boy was followed closely by a well-groomed cocker spaniel.

The boy passed the shelves of pet accessories, reached the counter and said, rather hesitantly, “My dog is bothered by fleas.”

“Oh, really?” asked Baker. He looked over the counter at the dog; it was sitting contentedly at the boy’s side, enjoying the store’s air conditioning — the temperature was in the mid-nineties outside, perfect flea weather. The dog wasn’t scratching.

In fact, the dog was immaculate. Its coat was freshly washed and shiny; the claws were neatly manicured; and it was alert and happy.

Baker decided to ask the boy again in case he made a mistake. “What did you say you needed, son?”

The boy looked at the shopkeeper as if he were trying to decide whether the man behind the counter was stupid or just senile. “I toldja. My dog’s having trouble with fleas.”

Baker leaned over, elbows on the counter. When he’d been in college — quite a few years back — he learned a Latin

phrase that he never forgot: *caveat emptor*, or “let the buyer beware.” If the kid wanted something for fleas, he could have all he wanted.

“Okay. Let’s see what we have.” Baker walked from behind the counter to a shelf laden with insect treatments. “How about some flea powder?”

The boy shook his head. “Nope. It doesn’t work.”

“This spray works pretty well.” Baker held out an aerosol can with a drawing of an obviously dead flea laying on its back.

“That doesn’t work either,” said the boy without hesitation.

“How about a flea collar?”

“Nope.”

“You can try giving the dog a bath in this shampoo or this soap. I’ve never had any complaints from any customers after they use either of them.” The boy was shaking his head. Baker frowned, “Don’t tell me. You’ve tried them and they don’t work either.”

“Yes, sir,” said the boy.



Mumps, pen and ink drawing by Leslie Anne Gregory

Baker pondered for a moment, looking alternately from the shelf of pet supplies to the dog, who still hadn't scratched since he'd entered the shop. "Are you sure your dog's bothered by a flea problem? You know he could have a skin disease of some sort."

"No, sir. It's fleas all right. Right, Scruffy?" The boy reached down and scratched the dog behind the ear. Scruffy yawned.

Baker scratched his own head. Scruffy was obviously happy, but the boy was positive that the dog was having trouble with fleas. As a local pet shop owner, Baker made it his business to know of all of the flea infested areas in town, which wasn't very difficult since the town was relatively small — fifteen thousand people on the average. The neighborhood surrounding the local pound was the usual hot spot, but the Bryerly Avenue area was having its problems this year because of stray cats. "Where do you live?" asked Baker, trying to pinpoint the problem.

"Out on the west side of town . . . on Old Turner Road," replied the boy.

"Isn't that where the old waste disposal area is?"

The boy nodded.

"I haven't heard of any problem out that way."

"Do you have anything else for fleas?" The boy was shifting from foot to foot, growing impatient.

Baker gave the shelves one last glance and said, "I'm sorry, son. That's about all I have. But, I still say that you should check and see if Scruffy has a skin disease."

"What about that?"

"Huh?"

"That." The boy was pointing at the Craftsman two-pound sledgehammer that lay on the counter. "Is it for sale?"

"Do you mean the hammer?"

"Yeah. Is it for sale?" The boy was becoming indignant.



*Untitled pen and ink
drawing by
Leslie Anne Gregory*

"Why do you want a hammer?"

The boy walked to the counter and lifted the sledge — it looked massive in his small hands. "Well, I've tried everything you have on the shelf. I might as well try this."

Following a moment of hesitation, Baker thought: Let the buyer beware, and said, "Why not." He returned to his salesman's position behind the counter. "Do you have three dollars?"

"Sure." The boy pulled a crumpled five dollar bill from his pocket.

Baker rang up the charge and returned the boy's change along with his receipt. "Will that be all?"

"I guess so. Thanks."

"Any time."

The boy turned and walked to the door. Before he went out, he checked up and down the street. "All clear, Scruffy. Let's go." The dog followed warily at the boy's heels as they left.

Curious, Baker stepped to the door and watched the boy as he walked up the street. The man felt his scalp tighten and his hair rise as a black shape leaped at the dog from the gloomy recesses of an alley — it was a thirty-pound, two-foot-long flea.

Scruffy yelped in fright and the boy spun around and smacked the mutant insect squarely on the head. The boy pulled the hammer free of the squished green mess, hugged the dog, and waved back at Baker, who was standing in his doorway slackjawed. Raising the hammer, the boy hollered, "This works great! Thanks a lot!"

Baker sat in the entrance of his shop watching as the boy ran happily up the street with Scruffy closely in tow. He made a mental note to stock up on sledgehammers.

THE END

Mirage

Reflections of the past
engulf the stranger
intricate dreams of passion
he desperately recounts;
interwoven with dreams
of ultimate comfort.
In the New World
he was certain
lies the Aladdin lamp.
In his illusion, he
found a twisted drink
of grape fruit juice and confusion.
For they in the New World
were green, so were
their money and their love;
a society made out of plastic.
Like a jolt of lightning it hits
the stranger awakening him
from his deep slumber.
It was a mirage.

Babatunde Obayan

stars on the mountains

stars on the mountains
glow to witness the neon death
in the valley below

stars on the mountains
pierce the sound barriers
sensing the darkness

all time appointed,
the brightest one
shoots an arch across the sky
to light the way before falling
to the ground exploding in
brilliant rays
shattering all darkness

stars on the mountains
weep to lose their bright son

In the valley below
the death prince laughs to have captured
such a fair one . . .

until at last the Sun rises
and it is finished

Susan Fortenberry



Untitled pen and ink drawing by Charles Tesche

10 'til

Just watch them snap to
and dance
to the command of a
bell's chime.
A procession in honor
of the passing of time,
students empty classrooms, and
fill hallways
with noise: laughter, sighs, complaints.

Within minutes,
hallways empty;
classrooms fill,
the teachers on
soapbox podiums
again.

The knowledge of Man
is spread, applied,
and tasted,
until the ringing
of the bell
calls it to end.

Goodbye, Aristotle,
it's time for a coke.

Susan E. Dollar



Untitled pen and ink drawing by Bob Tooker

The Strong Survive

Life after college
Seems I've been there before
Brown-nosing the bosses
Not something I adore

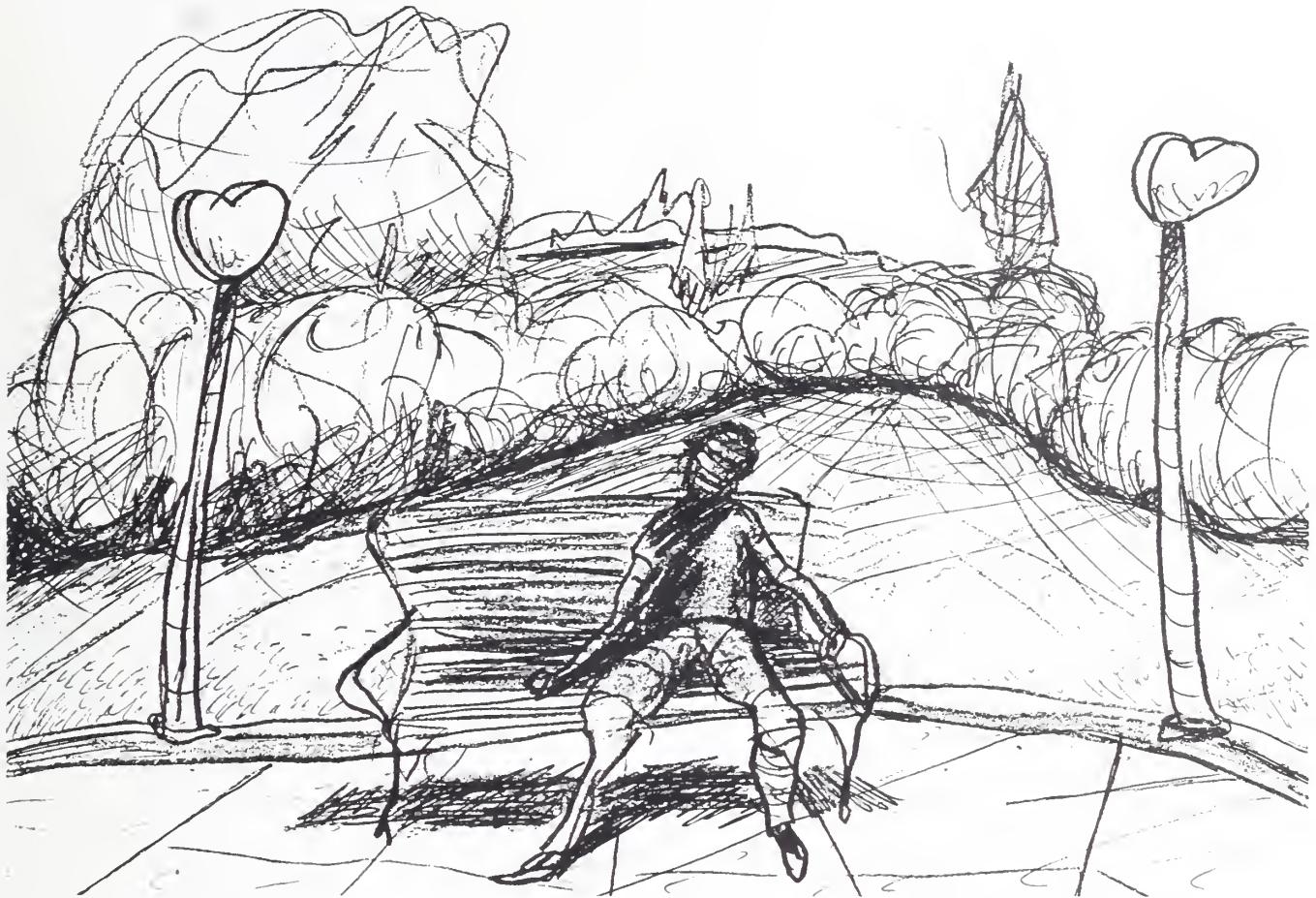
Four years of dorm life
Something seems amiss
Such artificial preppies
go through life in total bliss

Can they handle the real world?
Is it really paved so smooth?
Will they fall apart
At the slightest false move?

Will they rely on others
as I never would?
Never get the shaft?
Trusting, naive fools!

Life after college
Only the strong survive
Bad breaks, sheer fate
You get used to the surprises.

Terri Barnhouse



Untitled pen and ink drawing by Bob Tooke

Night

The shadow of the night envelopes me,
A security against the rough light of day,
The clouds move in black and white,
My mind moves into grey.

I'm confused and sleepless and the night envelopes,
With too many cigarettes, I write forlorn,
What am I doing as the night closes in on me,
It comforts and soothes and I can love again, maybe . . .

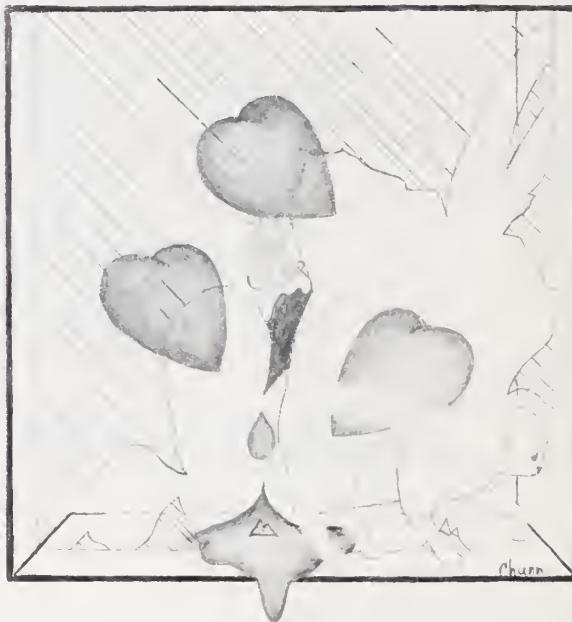
I can live again as long as the night comforts me

Chris Louisell

Neighbor Man

Donned in best Bolshevik:
His rounded balaclava masked mug
Top-tufted with up-flapped Prussian warmth;
He restlessly searches for daily news
Stalking yards with quick-chill movements.
His belly binding cloak of poly/cotton blue
out stuffs arms that will not fall
to well-wrapped sides.
Neighbor Man does not know I watch
His endless early-morning motions,
Or how I enjoy his borscht-winter ballet.

Leslie Anne Gregory



Untitled pencil drawing by Richard E. Chunn

Sur le Matin

Kitten and I cry in the morning
Sucking wounds in dawn's chill.
Tears slide down window's broken glass;
Noses once pressed to others
Leave anticipating greased scars
Upon the panes;
Boned backs ache
Arced alone against hard-wood sills.
Le Petit Chat stretches, yawns melancholy;
I turn to the West.

Leslie Anne Gregory



"Comanche Buffalo Headdress"



"Hard Times"



"The Chipped Cup"

Shawn E. Wyble



"A Mourning Warrior"



"Rearing Horse"



"Grazing Horse"

CONTRIBUTORS

James R. Bartholomew — Dr. Bartholomew is Head of the Department of Languages and is well-known for his poetry. A sampling was included in the *Argus* poetry read last fall.

Terri Barnhouse — Terri is a freshman, majoring in journalism and minoring in art. Her poetry is appearing for the first time in this issue of *Argus*.

Jodi Ann Baudean — A freshman political science major, Jodi hails from New Orleans. This is the first time her work has appeared in *Argus*.

Rhonda Byers — Rhonda is a Zwolle-ite and a sophomore English major.

Richard E. Chunn — A New Orleans native, Richard is a junior microbiology major and a member of TKE who "hates the fake."

Richard Constance — Richard, a member of Sigma Tau Gamma fraternity, is a computer science major. His poem, "At Least the Memories Remain," was featured at the poetry read in the fall.

Elizabeth Corley — Elizabeth, a senior theatre major, is a member of Who's Who Among American Colleges and Universities and Outstanding Young Women of America. Her free time is devoted to participation in NSU theatre productions, reading, and music.

Angela Crittle — Angela is a junior nursing major from Natchitoches. Her poem "Such A Little Thing" was featured in *Argus*' fall poetry read.

Ellen Dollar — Ellen is a sophomore wildlife management major, minoring in law enforcement. Much interested in the preservation of our wild lands, she lists camping and canoeing among her pastimes.

Jim W. Dollar — An alumnus of NSU, Jim is now a Presbyterian minister in Amory, Mississippi. He is a published member and former officer of the Mississippi Poetry Society who turns to poetry as a means of self-expression and discovery.

Silas H. Dollar — Silas is a 5-year-old attending St. Mary's kindergarten. Si appreciates the artistry of Michael Jackson and the Stray Cats, as well as Scooby Doo and He-man.

Susan E. Dollar — President of Sigma Tau Delta, Susan, a 1983 NSU graduate, is a graduate assistant in the English department. From Natchitoches, she enjoys antique stores, Van Morrison, Larry Bud Melman, and her dog, Bilbeau.

Steve Edwards — Steve is a senior general studies major, who is also studying watchmaking and jewelry at Natchitoches Central Vo-Tech. The 29-year-old San Diego, Ca. native enjoys music and beadwork as hobbies.

Gary Fields — Gary, a graduate assistant in the English department, can often be found "sporting" away hours at the *Natchitoches Times*. He enjoys bowling and is frequently seen "lake-sitting."

Drew Files — A freshman in computer technology, Drew is from Mansfield, La. He enjoys riding horses and motorcycles, as well as fishing and skiing.

Allen M. Ford — Allen is a NSU alumnus who is currently based in San Francisco, Ca. Allen is doing freelance woodwork and graphic art on the scenic west coast.

Susan Fortenberry — Susan is a computer science major from Shreveport. She belongs to Alpha Lambda Delta.

Lurane D. Francis — Lurane is a northern transplant, hailing from Marquette, Michigan. A LPN, Lori has returned to school in NSU's nursing program. She enjoys running and rummage-saleing.

LeAnn Gray — LeAnn is a native of Keatchie, La. She is a major in special education. This is the first of LeAnn's work to appear in *Argus*.

Leslie Anne Gregory — Leslie is a sophomore English major from Natchitoches who admires William Carlos Williams. Vice-president of Sigma Tau Delta, Les can usually be found writing post-cards and driving around North Louisiana country-sides.

Mark Griffith — Mark's photo "Columns" was awarded honorable mention in the Spring photography contest. This is the first time his work has appeared in *Argus*.

Rebecca Elaine Hale — From Montgomery, La., Elaine is a junior English education major. A member of Sigma Tau Delta, Elaine is an amateur novelist and poet whose work has appeared in previous issues of *Argus*.

Sharon K. Hammel — A graduate student in theatre, Sharon lists scuba diving, oral interpretation, and golf as her hobbies. The Hot Springs, Arkansas native is a member of AFA, Pi Kappa Delta, Alpha Psi Omega, and Sigma Kappa sorority.

Walter C. Holmes — Dr. Holmes, an associate professor of biology at NSU, studies tropical flora and has recently completed a book on Louisiana-French ethnobotany. This spring, he is preparing for a summer trip to Belize.

Reneé Hughes — *Argus* photography editor, Reneé is from Jena, Louisiana. She is a senior photography major, and plans to be the first student to graduate from NSU with a degree in photography.

Wanda Huhner — Wanda is a sophomore in English education (secondary). She is from Gretna, Louisiana, and this is the first of her work to appear in *Argus*.

Michelle Jackson — Michelle is a native of Shreveport. This is the first time her photography has appeared in *Argus*.

Chirre Kraatz — A graduating senior in wildlife management, Chirre is interested in working with wildlife and preserving their natural habitat. Her other interests are horses, reading, drawing, and being outdoors.

Chris Louisell — Chris is a junior theatre major who is a professional mime and choreographer. He spends his spare time writing and playing tennis, and is a member of Phi Kappa Phi and the University Players. Chris writes poetry to keep his sanity; this is the first time he has been published.

Lisa Madden — Lisa's poem "Delight" is appearing in this *Argus*. It is the first time her work has appeared here.

Shari Miller — Once an NSU graduate student, Shari is now attending the University of Indiana pursuing a creative writing degree. A member of Sigma Tau Delta, she has published short-stories, drama, and a collection of poetry.

Andy Nelson — Andy, a photography major from Tarkington, Texas, is on the NSU track team. His hobbies include hunting, fishing, and a number of sports. He hopes to pursue a career in photography and advertising.

David Milligan — David Milligan is a NSU faculty member in IET, and can frequently be found "running" between classes.

Babatunde Obayan — A junior majoring in public relations, Babatunde is from Lagos, Nigeria. His aspirations include pursuing graduate studies in international relations.

Patricia Quayhagen — Pat is a returning student in English/French. Married for 26 years, she has 6 children and 3 grandchildren. She is a newspaper reporter, a teacher (Karate and elementary school), and her major interests are reading, writing, and the theatre.

R. Mark Rachal — A 1983 NSU fall graduate in broadcasting and journalism, Ron is a graduate of the Ocean Corporation of deep sea diving and served six years in the Air Force as a fireman.

Reneé Richard — Reneé, a photography major from Sulphur, La., enjoys all sports, especially Lady Demon softball.

Jeffery Rivers — Jeffery is a physical therapy major from Zwolle. He is a sophomore and plays the piano and organ; other interests include reading. He is a member of Tri-Beta.

Angelique Schexnider — Angelique is a sophomore child psychology major who has been active in all areas of the theatre since she was 5-years-old.

T. L. Scott — Senior T. L. Scott is a native of Altuna, Alabama. She has been writing poetry for six years and hopes to someday pursue an M.F.A. in creative writing.

Kathleen E. Smith — Kathleen is an adjunct NSU faculty member in the Department of Languages. She writes romance novels, plays, and her book *Lt. Col. Emily A. Miller, a biography* is to be published soon. The holder of an M.A. in Women's History from the University of Maryland, she plans to attend law school this fall.

Juliet F. Snowden — Juliet is a Natchitoches Central High School senior who plans to attend LSU in the pre-law program. Julie enjoys dancing, writing, and playing piano.

Gerald R. Spencer — From Pleasant Hill, La., Gerald is a health and PE major who is involved in music, orienteering, and many other activities that keep him on the run. "You can't be inspired just sitting around," he says.

Charles Tesche — Charles is a senior aviation science/business major from Paris, France. Besides drawing, Charles' interests include tennis, jogging and swimming.

Edward R. Thomas — A post graduate student at NSU, Mr. Thomas is a retired Methodist minister who enjoys his grandchildren and his new spring garden. Ed is also involved with "Parents Anonymous," a group that helps parents of abused children.

Bob Tookey — After receiving a degree in 1980, Bob is now back in school (after a "brief encounter with this cruel and wicked world") working on a second degree in the area of pataphysics.

Debra A. Waters — Debra, *Argus* editor, is an English major/botany minor. She will be a graduate assistant in the biology department of USL this fall.

James Webb — A senior majoring in advertising design, Jim has special interests in music and developing his own understanding of life. Graduation is currently among his most intense ambitions.

Laurie Wisdom — NSU alumna Laurie Wisdom graduated in the summer of '83. An art major, she is now pursuing her artistic education by attending Texas Tech in Lubbock.

Shawn Wyble — A member of Kappa Sigma fraternity, Shawn's work is appearing in *Argus* for the first time.



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